




SUPER SPECIAL SUMMER GIANT

VAMPIRELLA

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OCTOBER 1974



**THE DREAD
COBRA QUEEN
RETURNS.
SHE SLITHERS
AND STRIKES
FROM THE HEART
OF THE
AMAZON JUNGLE.
HER PREY:
VAMPIRELLA
AND
ADAM VAN HELSING.**

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VAMPIRELLA

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HERE'S A JOLTIN'
JUNGLE OPUS TO MAKE
YOUR BLOOD BOIL AND
COIL... A LITTLE DERANGED
DITTY I CALL...

COBRA QUEEN

JACE JACKSON'S FACE WAS BURIED
BENEATH A LAYER OF SWEAT AFTER
ANOTHER FULL DAY UNDER THE HOT SUN
OF INDIA. BUT HE, AND HIS COMPANIONS,
THE DISTINGUISHED SIR REGINALD OF
LONDON, AND THE SOUTHERN PHYSICIAN,
DR. JAMES LONGLEY, MOVED ONWARD...
ONWARD...

BLIMEY, JACOB!
WE'VE BEEN TREKING
THROUGH THIS INFERNAL
JUNGLE FOR DAYS, NOW!
AND STILL NOTHING
IN SIGHT!

SIR REGINALD'S
RIGHT, I RECKON.
I MEAN, WE BEEN
JUST MARCHIN' ALONG
HERE, CHOPPIN' OUR
WAY THROUGH ALL
THIS HERE FOLIAGE
AND EVERYTHING, AND
STILL WE AIN'T COME
ACROSS WHAT WE
BEEN LOOKIN' FOR!
DON'T YOU THINK
WE OUGHTA BE
TURNIN' BACK?

NO! I'M NOT
TAKING ONE STEP
BACK TOWARD
CIVILIZATION UNTIL I FIND
WHAT I SET OUT TO
FIND! THAT **ANCIENT MAP**
IS GOING TO LEAD US
RIGHT TO THE LOST
**TEMPLE OF THE
COBRA...**

...AND THE
LEGENDARY
**COBRA
QUEEN!**

BUT, JACOB!
WE'VE BEEN
FOLLOWING THAT MAP
TO THE LETTER! IF
THERE WERE ANY RUINS OR
ANYTHING IN THIS AREA,
WE'D HAVE FOUND THEM
BY NOW!

THEY'RE AROUND
HERE... SOMEWHERE!
I JUST KNOW IT! I CAN
FEEL IT! DIDN'T THE FACT
THAT THE NATIVES WOULDN'T
GO WITH US TIP YOU OFF
THAT WE WERE ON THE
TRACK OF SOMETHING
THEY FEARED? WELL,
I'M GOIN' ON!



YOU TWO CAN TURN BACK IF YOU WANT! OR STAY HERE COUNTING YOUR FINGERS AND TOES!

WAIT, JACOB! WE'RE NOT GOING TO DESERT YOU! NOT AFTER ALL WE THREE HAVE GONE THROUGH TO GET THIS FAR! WAIT!!!

YEAH, COME ON, NOW! DON'T HOLD THIS AGAIN! I AM NOT ONE TO TURN JACK RABBIT AN' HIGHTAIL IT!



THAT GOES FOR ME AS WELL!

GOOD! I HOPED I COULD...



GOOD LORD! STAY BACK, BOTH OF YOU!

RRRGGRRRRWWW



IT'S THE BIGGEST CAT I EVER SAW! A REGULAR MONSTER!

NOW DON'T MOVE! I THINK I CAN GET A COUPLE OF SLUGS RIGHT INTO HIS BRAIN IF WE DON'T EXCITE HIM! QUIET, NOW...



OK, YOU'RE IN MY SIGHTS! NOW TO...

BUT THEN, AS UNEXPECTEDLY AS IT HAD APPEARED...

GREAT GLORY! IT JUST STOPPED! LIKE IT SMELLED SOMETHIN' MORE THAN YOUR GUN!



YE GODS! DID YOU SEE THAT? I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO SHOOT!



I SAY! THAT BLOODY BEAST IS JUST STARING UP INTO THE TREETOP LIKE SOMETHING IS UP THERE!

AN' IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THAT SOMETHING AIN'T GONNA STAY HIDDEN MUCH LONGER...!

SNIFF!
SNIFF!
GRRRR!

THERE! THERE'S OUR ANSWER!

W-WHAT IS THAT... THAT THING!

O-DON'T... ASK... ME !!!

HSSSSSSSSSS!
GRRRRRRRRRR!

IT'S A COBRA!
A GIANT COBRA!
LARGER THAN ANY BOA OR PYTHON IN THE WORLD!

B-BUT... COBRAS DON'T GROW THAT LARGE!

HOPE! AND I AIN'T NEVER SEEN ONE FIGHT LIKE A CONSTRUCTOR BEFORE!

IT'S ALL OVER!
LOOKS AS IF THAT THERE TIGER NEVER EVEN HAD A CHANCE!

NOW THERE'S NO DOUBT.

AND NOW THAT MONSTROSITY IS GOING BACK INTO THE JUNGLE!

WE'RE ON THE
RIGHT TRACK! THE
LEGENDS TALK OF
A GIGANTIC
COBRA!

A HUGE SNAKE
THAT ISN'T REALLY
A SNAKE AT ALL...
BUT A... WOMAN!

W-WHAT? WHAT'S
THAT YOU'RE
TRYING TO SAY?
YOU MEAN...

AS OLD AS THE TEMPLE
ITSELF, WHICH SPANS
CENTURIES OF
UNFATHOMABLE BEAUTY!
BUT EQUALLY EVIL,
EXISTING FOR ONLY
ONE PURPOSE...

...TO TRANSFORM
HERSELF INTO THE
GIANT SNAKE... MUCH
IN THE FASHION OF THE
EUROPEAN WEREWOLF...
AND TO INFLECT HER
OWN PEOPLE WITH
HER VENOM...

YOU HEARD ME!
A WOMAN!! THE COBRA
QUEEN, RULER OF THE LOST
TEMPLE OF THE COBRA!

...TO POISON
THEIR BLOOD AND
THEIR WILL, TURNING
THEM INTO HELPLESS
SLAVES... INTO
MINDLESS, WALKING
ZOMBIES!



NO MORE WORDS ARE SPOKEN...
EVEN AS THE SUN AGAIN BEATS
DOWN OVER A QUIET BURIAL...
AND...

RACKSTON MUST
BE TAKEN THIS PURTY
HARD! HE AIN'T SAID A
SINGLE THING ALL
MORNIN'! WELL, SIR
REGINALD WAS ONE OF
THE BEST FELLARS
AROUND!



THEN... RACKSTON AND DR.
LONGLEY HALT, THEIR EYES
BULGING AT THE AWESOME
DISPLAY OF...

BUT THEIR
EYES... LIKE YOU
TOLD US ABOUT...
ZOMBIES!

AMAZONS!
LOOK AT THEM...
MAGNIFICENT AND
THEIR LOIN-CLOTHS...
COBRA SKINS!



I KNOW! BUT
DON'T FIGHT THEM!
LET THEM TAKE US
WHERE THEY WANT
TO! IF THEY
WANTED TO KILL
US THEY WOULD
HAVE ALREADY
DONE IT!



RECKON YOU'RE
RIGHT! IFPEN WE
TRIED TO FIGHT NOW
WE'D BE SPEARED
TA DEATH! AND I
DON'T HANKER FER
THAT KINDA
MISBEHAVIN'!

PRESENTLY, AS THE THICKNESS OF
THE JUNGLE GRADUALLY DIMINISHES...



THERE IT IS, LONGLEY!
WHAT I'VE HEARD WHISPERS
OF... DREAMED OF FINDING...
ALL MY LIFE! THE TEMPLE
OF THE COBRA!





I DON'T LIKE THIS HERE PLACE! SMELL THAT? LIKE THE STINK OF A SNAKE! NOW I KINDA WISH WE'D OF FOUGHT BACK WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE!

SHUT UP! LOOK THERE!



THE COBRA QUEEN!!!

I SEE THAT MY LITTLE ATTEMPTS TO FRIGHTEN YOU AWAY IN THE JUNGLE HAVE FAILED! NO MATTER! YOU HAVE COME TO FIND THE COBRA QUEEN... AND YOU SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED! AS SOON AS YOU FEEL MY FANGS...

BOY HOWDY, JAKE! 'FFEN' YOU GOT SOME TRICK FOR HANDLIN' HER UP YOUR SLEEVE... PULL IT OUT NOW!



BARE YOUR FANGS ALL YOU LIME, MY BEAUTIFUL QUEEN! THAT WON'T SCARE ME... NOT AFTER THE TROUBLE I'VE GONE THROUGH TO FIND YOU... PROVE TO MYSELF THAT YOU DO EXIST!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SUCH CHATTERING, MORTAL? IF YOU THINK TO PROLONG YOUR LIFE BY IDLE TALK... WATCH! AND TREMBLE!



NOT EXACTLY A TRICK, DOCTOR...



MORE LIKE PROVING MYSELF! ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN A MISFIT... A FREAK... NOW AT LAST I'VE FOUND MY PLACE! AND WHAT BETTER PLACE...



FOR A KING COBRA THAN BESIDE HIS QUEEN!

GNYAHHHHHHHHH!!

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS... A MALE! ONCE MORE THE CULT OF THE COBRA CAN THRIVE... AND SPREAD!

HMM! WONDER IF PAXTON FOUND OUT ABOUT THE QUEEN THROUGH A COMPUTER DATING SERVICE? THEY CERTAINLY SHARE THE SAME INTERESTS... IN THIS CASE, DR. LOWMEY!



IT LIES IN THE JUNGLE, SOMEWHERE NEAR THE ASSAM-BURMA BORDER, GLEAMING LIKE SOME TIME-ENCRUSTED JEWEL, AGAINST THE BLOOD-RED SUNSET... THE TEMPLE! HER TEMPLE, AND TO THE TEMPLE NOW COMES ONE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, THE WORLD OF DRAKULON...

VAMPIRELLA



SHE HAS COME TO DO **BATTLE** IN THIS TEMPLE, TO **CONFRONT** THE ONE WHO DWELLS HERE, TO TURN HER HAND AGAINST...

SHE WHO WAITS!



AND FOR **VAMPIRELLA**, SUCH A BATTLE, SUCH A CONFRONTATION, MAY MEAN THE **END** OF HER VERY EXISTENCE!

BUT HOW DID IT BEGIN? LOOK HERE, TO THE CITY OF IMPHAL,
UNDER THE DEEP MANTLE OF A NIGHT NOW PASSED...



...WHERE THIS MAN, FOR WHOM THE
DARKNESS IS BUT A CONTINUATION
OF HIS WAKING DAYS...



...MOVES TO STRIKE!



CONRAD VAN
HELSING...!

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!

WHY SHOULDN'T
I TURN ON YOU,
VAMPIRESS? HAVEN'T
YOU TURNED ON MY
SON?

A-ADAM...?
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT Y--



VAMPI...! VAN
HELSING...! I
HEARD THE NOISE...
ALMOST DROPPED MY
NIGHTCAP!

WITH BRANDY SCARCE
IN THESE REGIONS... ONE
CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.

A GREAT PITY
YOUR ASSISTANT
DOESN'T SHARE
YOUR PARTICULAR
THIRST, MR.
PENDRAGON.

AND IN HIS HOTEL SUITE... CONRAD DOES!

THERE! LOOK
AT THE WOUND I
CAN ONLY FEEL!
LOOK AT THE
TRANCE HE'S IN...

B-BUT I
DIDN'T DO THIS...
I COULDN'T!

THEN TELL ME
IT'S NOT A
VAMPIRE'S
WORK!

CONRAD, I WON'T
BE ACCUSED LIKE
THIS! IF SOMETHING'S
HAPPENED TO ADAM
SHOW ME!

NO?! HAVEN'T
CERTAIN INGREDIENTS
IN THE SERUM THAT
CONTROLS YOUR
BLOODLUST RECENTLY
BECOME SCARCE...?

HASN'T
ADAM
BEEN
SEARCHING

THE JUNGLE OF
THIS AREA TO LOCATE
A NEW SUPPLY...?

ISN'T THAT WHY
YOU AND PENDRAGON
DROPPED YOUR
MAGIC TOUR TO
RUSH HERE TO
MEET HIM?

ONLY TO
FIND HE'D
FAILED...!
AND UNABLE
TO RESTRAIN
YOUR
MONSTROUS
NATURE... YOU
ATTACKED
HIM!

NO! ADAM WIRED HE WAS
SUCCESSFUL... THAT'S WHY
WE CAME! THERE'S SOME
OTHER REASON FOR ALL
THIS!



THE DOOR WAS LOCKED
FROM INSIDE WHEN I
ARRIVED AND FOUND HIM.
VAMPIRELLA... BUT THE
WINDOW WAS OPEN!

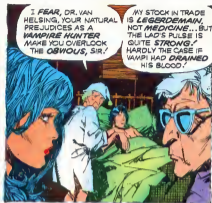
ONLY A BAT COULD
ENTER THAT WAY!

AND SHOULD I
IGNORE MY OWN
PSYCHIC VISION THAT
DREW ME HERE FROM
ACROSS THE GLOBE?

THE VISION
THAT SHOWED
ADAM...

...MENACED
BY A WOMAN NOT
OF HUMAN KENT?





I FEAR, DR. VAN HELSING, YOUR NATURAL PREJUDICES AS A VAMPIRE HUNTER MAKE YOU OVERLOOK THE OBVIOUS, SIR!

MY STOCK IN TRADE IS LEGERDEMAIN, NOT MEDICINE... BUT THE LAD'S PULSE IS QUITE STRONG! HARDLY THE CASE IF VAMPI HAD DRAINED HIS BLOOD!



B-BUT... THE WOUNDS...! THE TRANCE... THE LOCKED ROOM ENTERED...! WHAT ELSE BUT A VAMPIRE COULD DO IT?

IT ENTERS IN SILENCE. EARLIER CONRAD'S SUDDEN ARRIVAL HAD FRIGHTENED IT AWAY. BUT THE MISTRESS HAS ORDERED IT TO RETURN, TO FINISH WHAT WAS BEGUN...

SO IT SLITHERS FOR THE ROOM'S DEEPEST SHADOW AND HIDES, UNTIL...



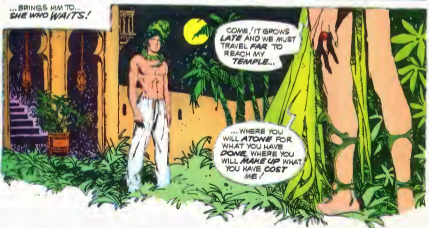
PENDY'S RIGHT, DR. VAN HELSING... AT LEAST LET'S GET A PHYSICIAN'S OPINION.

AGREED. THOUGH MY PSYCHIC POWERS SCREAM THAT THIS IS BEYOND NATURAL EXPLANATION!

AND WHEN ALL IS DARK AND QUIET, IT MOVES... TO THE BED OF ADAM VAN HELSING, TO HIS VERY BODY, AND...



... BRINGS HIM TO... SHE WHO WAITS!



COME! IT GROWS LATE AND WE MUST TRAVEL FAR TO REACH MY TEMPLE...

... WHERE YOU WILL ATONE FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. WHERE YOU WILL MAKE UP WHAT YOU HAVE COST ME!



WE'RE SORRY
TO AWAKEN
YOU, BUT--

A HOTEL DOCTOR'S LOT,
MEMSAHIB! FROM YOUR
DESCRIPTION, YOUR
FRIEND'S WOUND SOUNDS
LIKE COBRA BITE...

...IN WHICH CASE, HE
SHOULD NOT BE IN A
TRANCE, BUT DEAD!
STILL, I--



ADAM...! ADAM! I CAN
FEEL IT... WE'RE TOO LATE!
HE'S BEEN TAKEN...!

THUS, THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW FIND VAMPI,
PENDRAGON, AND CONRAD VAN HELSING
MOVING THROUGH JUNGLE DENSE AND
VERDANT...

ACCORDING
TO THIS MAP FROM
ADAM'S ROOM... WE'RE
INTO THE SAME AREA
HE EXPLORED.

THIS IS THE WAY
THEY BROUGHT
HIM... THE PSYCHIC
EMANATIONS
COULDN'T BE
STRONGER!



SOMETHING ELSE IS QUITE
STRONG... THAT SMELL! IT'S
ENOUGH TO DRIVE A MAN
TO DRIN--

PENDY!
CONRAD!
THERE'S A
BODY
AHEAD...



... IT'S BEEN
DECAPITATED!

I SENSE SOMETHING
MORE, VAMPIRELLA...
SOMETHING INVOLVING
ADAM... PERHAPS DURING
HIS FIRST
EXPLORATION...



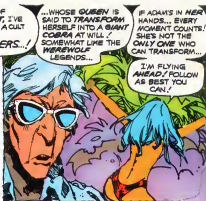
... I SEE HIM IN BATTLE... WITH A CREATURE
HUGE, FANTASTIC... A CREATURE WHOSE FANGS
ARE ABOUT TO SINK HOME... UNTIL ADAM
SWINGS HIS MACHETE...



ADAM BEHEADS A MAMMOTH SNAKE... AND WE FIND A MAN IN ITS PLACE?! THANK BAACHUS, I CAME WELL-ARMED...

...WITH BRANDY!

IN MY PURSUIT OF MATTERS OCCULT, I'VE HEARD HINTS OF... A CULT OF COBRA WORSHIPPERS...!



...WHOSE QUEEN IS SAID TO TRANSFORM HERSELF INTO A GIANT COBRA AT WILL! SOMEWHAT LIKE THE WEREWOLF LEGENDS...

IF ADAM'S IN HER HANDS... EVERY MOMENT COUNTS! SHE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TRANSFORM...

I'M FLYING AHEAD! FOLLOW AS BEST YOU CAN!

AND VAMPIR'S FEARS AS SHE TAKES BAT-WINGED FLIGHT... ARE WELL-BASED!



YOU KILLED MY MATE, HANDSOME ONE... THE ONLY MAN I EVER FOUND WHO WAS LIKE ME... *

...KING COBRA TO THE COBRA QUEEN!

AT FIRST I MEANT ONLY TO FOLLOW YOU BACK TO THE CITY AND SLAY YOU... BUT YOU ARE HANDSOME, AND I DO HAVE NEEDS BEYOND VENGEANCE.



SO, INSTEAD, YOU WILL FEEL THE FANGS OF THE TEMPLE'S SACRED COBRAS...!

THEY WHO FEAST ON HUMAN BLOOD... AND DISCHARGE THE VENOM OF TRANSFORMATION!

WHEN THEY ARE DONE, YOU SHALL BE MANY NO MORE, YOU SHALL REPLACE HIM WHO I LOVED AS...

...KING COBRA!

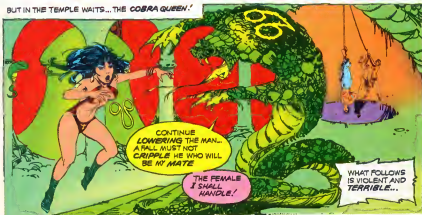
SUCH WAS THE **BEGINNING**, AND WHAT FOLLOWED. NOW, WITH THE APPEARANCE OF VAMPIRELLA ON THE TEMPLE STEPS BEFORE THE COBRA QUEEN'S AMAZON SLAVES...



THE COMBAT IS LONG AND DEADLY, THRUSTING SPEARS VERSUS OTHER-WORLDFIGHTING SKILLS! THE ZOMBIE-LIKE WARRIORESSES GIVE GROUND...UNTIL ONE CAN SLIP BEHIND THE GIRL FROM DRAKULON!



BUT IN THE TEMPLE WAITS...THE COBRA QUEEN!



IT BUYS THE NEEDED TIME FOR PENDRAGON AND CONRAD TO REACH THE ROPE...



V-VAN HELDING...!
JOIN ME QUICKLY...!

BUT VAMPIRELLA IS LEFT IN THE COILS OF A SUPERIOR FOE!

THEN, AS THE GLEAMING FANGS DIP TO STRIKE...



PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP

SKKKRRRTCH

FOOOOOOOMP

VAMPIRELLA!
TAKE
BAT-FORM...!

AND AS A BAT FLIES
FREE... A GUBEN
DIES IN FLAME.

PENDY, I DON'T THINK UNTIL
TODAY I REALIZED HOW MUCH
YOU CARED FOR ME...
SACRIFICING YOUR ENTIRE
SUPPLY OF BRANDY TO
START THAT FIRE!

I MERELY
FOLLOWED AN OLD
HOME REMEDY.
MY DEAR... USING
LIQUOR TO TREAT
SNAKE BITE!



OF COURSE,
IT'S NOT OFTEN
APPLIED BEFORE
THE FACT!

THE IMPORTANT
THING IS YOUNG ADAM
IS SAFE AND SOUND...!
SO WHAT IF I CAN
NEVER FACE CREPE'S
SUZETTE AGAIN!

PITY THE POOR PROTAGONIST OF THIS STORY, DAVID WINTERS, CAUGHT IN THE FLUMY WEBBING OF LIFE... UNKNOWNING OF THE MANY LIVES OF WOMEN...

DAVID WINTERS HAS PLAYED THIS SCENE BEFORE. ONLY THE BIT PLAYERS CHANGE THE CHOREOGRAPHY. THE BIT PLAYER THIS TIME IS HARRIET STONE.

PLAY IT COLD, PLAY IT HARD, RE-ENACT THAT RIM, STIFF WALK, ONLY THE FAINT CHILL OF THE NIGHT AUTUMN AIR SUGGESTS THIS ISN'T THE SAME EPISODE STAGED THREE MONTHS BEFORE TO A WARM JULY EVENING.

THE TORN SOBBINGS, THE MASCARA BLEED TEARS HAVE BEEN MIMICRED ON OTHER YOUNG FACES. IT IS HARDLY NOTICEABLE THAT OTHER LINGS RIP OUT THESE SOBS, THAT NEW EYES SPILL THESE TEARS.



JUST FAINT TREMORS ABOUT THE FINGERS BETRAY ANY EMOTION TO THE ABRUPT TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP. A TYPICAL REACTION.

IT DOESN'T GET ANY MORE DIFFICULT, JUST THE FAMILIAR HAGGING DREAD OF THE PARTING SCENE. NO SWEET SORROW HERE, BABY!



"SONG OF A SAD-EYED SORCERESS"

THE LAST THOUGHT FADES TO NEW STIMULI. WINTERS SEES ONLY THE SWEEP OF HER BACK, THE GRACEFUL FALL OF HER HAIR, AND YET SOMETHING CATCHES IN HIS THROAT AND A STRANGE SCENT CATCHES AT HIS NOSTRILS.



YOU WISH TO KNOW WHO I AM, DAVID WINTERS?

I AM **NAHEMAN!** AND BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS THROUGH YOU WILL KNOW ME LIKE YOU HAVE KNOWN NO OTHER WOMAN!

THAT I CAN PROMISE YOU, DAVID WINTERS!



HARRIET STONE HAD ONLY BEEN WORKING FOR KELLY AND LISSON, INC. FOR LITTLE OVER A WEEK WHEN DAVID WINTERS HAD FIRST WALKED INTO HER LIFE, DELIVERING ONE OF THOSE SMUG, ARTIFICIAL SMILES, SHE ASSUMED, THAT HE USUALLY DELIVERED IN EXECUTIVE SUITES, AND SHE HAD BEEN ALSO AWARE THAT HE WAS NOT ONLY ON THE MAKE IN A BUSINESS SENSE, HIS ENTIRE LIFE STYLE WAS ONE CONTINUOUS "MAKE-IT" DRIVE.



THAT HAD BEEN HER FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DAVID WINTERS. IN FACT, IT HAD BEEN HER FIRST ACTUAL ENCOUNTER WITH ANYBODY IN NEW YORK CITY SINCE HER ARRIVAL. SHE HAD LOOKED INTO THE DUSTY MIRROR EACH MORNING, ASSURING HERSELF THAT SHE HAD NO STARS IN HER EYES, THAT SHE WAS TOUGH AND SELF-RELIANT, BUT AS THE NIGHT CITY SOUNDS DRIFTED UP INTO HER TENEMENT ROOM THE RETURN LOOK WAS NOT AS FIRM, AND - DESPITE THE NEAR RELIGIOUS LECTURES SHE HAD PREACHED SILENTLY TO HERSELF - DAVID WINTERS BECAME THE FIRST RECOGNIZABLE FACE.

THE STING OF THE AUTUMN WIND SHARPENS ON HIS CHEEKS AS HE STEPS FORWARD. A DIM VOICE PLEADS WITH HIM. NOT TO TAKE THE STEP, BUT HIS MOVEMENTS ARE NOT OF HIS OWN VOLITION.



THE SAME DIM VOICE THROWS OUT THE WARNING AGAIN, BUT DAVID WINTERS KNOWS IT IS A LOST CAUSE THAT HE WILL FOLLOW THE FLOWING APPARITION, THAT THE DECISION HAS BEEN DETERMINED IN A PART OF HIM THAT HE HAS NEVER VISITED BEFORE.

THE WEEKS HAD PASSED — LONE, SOLITARY WEEKS SPLINTERED WITH BRIEF MOMENTS OF HUMAN CONTACT DURING OFFICE HOURS; AND HARRIET STONE HAD REALIZED THAT SHE HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE MIDST OF SO MANY PEOPLE, NOR HAD SHE EVER BEEN SO ALONE.

JUST DON'T
GET ANY WEIRD
IDEAS, DAVID.



BEYOND THAT THESE CO-WORKERS OF HERS GOT ALL THE BREAKS AND BENEFITS WHICH ADDED TO HER LAUREL.

SHE HAD KNOWN DAVID WINTERS GAME; SHE HAD KNOWN HE WAS TRYING TO SCORE ALL THROUGH THOSE UNCTUOUS MONOLOGUES THAT HE DELIVERED, YET, FINALLY, TO COMPENSATE FOR THE HOSTILITY AND ALONENESS, SHE YIELDED, ONE MEETING LEADING TO ANOTHER, BOTH OF THEM PLAYING THE USUAL MALE-FEMALE POLITICS....

WHO ME? WOULD I
DO ANYTHING LIKE
THAT?



....UNTIL THAT NIGHT SHE HAD INVITED HIM TO HER APARTMENT.

YES, I THINK YOU WOULD
STAY HERE WHILE I FIX US A DRINK
IN THE KITCHEN. HAVE A LOOK
AROUND.



QUITE A PAD YOU'VE GOT
HERE, AND LISTEN, I'M SORRY
ABOUT THE COME-ON THE
PAST FEW WEEKS. GUESS IT'S
THE PRESSURE YOU KNOW?

CHANGE
OF TACT,
DAVID?



LISTEN, HARRIET, YOU'VE
GOT THE MOST SUSPICIOUS
MIND THAT...



WHAT IN
THE HELL IS
THAT?

YOU'RE
WHAT?

OH, I SEE
YOU'VE DISCOVERED
MY ATHAME.

ATHAME? DON'T
YOU KNOW ANYTHING
ABOUT THE OCCULT
ARTS? IT'S A
CONSECRATION KNIFE.
WITCHES WOULD USE
THOSE TO INVOKE
DEMONS BY DRAWING A
MAGIC CIRCLE WITH IT.
IT'S ONE OF MY
MOST PRIZED
POSSESSIONS.



HARRIET STONE HAD LISTENED TO WINTERS REPLY, STILL AWARE AS TO HIS NATURE, SHE HAD REMAINED STOIC, UNATTAINABLE THROUGH-OUT HIS SOPHISTICATED RAP. PLEASED THAT ANOTHER PERSON SHARED THE ROOM FOR THE MOMENT; AND SHE HAD ALSO BEEN AWARE THAT HER PASSION FOR THE OCCULT WAS A FACET OF HER WINTERS HAD NEVER SUSPECTED....

....AND THROUGHOUT THAT EVENING HE COULD NEVER REALLY FORGET THE BLADE OF ATHAME RESTING UNDER THE FLOOR-LAMP.

TWO SECTIONS OF WINTER'S MIND BATTLE FOR DOMINANCE, ONE SECTION IS FILLED WITH THE FLEEING SPECTRE BEFORE HIM, BUT THE OTHER SECTION IS GRIPPING AT SOME THIN EDGE OF NORMALITY.

WHO IS THIS CREATURE WHO BECKONS AND SWAYS BEFORE HIM, ENTICING HIM ONWARD WITH EVERY FLUID MOVEMENT, EACH SUPPLE CURVE DEMANDING OBEDIENCE? IS HE FALLING PREY TO SOME PSYCHOTIC FEAR OF WOMEN THAT HE HAS HELD IN CHECK DURING HIS ENTIRE LIFE?

BUT THAT IS FOOLISHNESS. YET, IF IT IS FOOLISHNESS, THEN WHY CAN'T HE STOP HIS FEET FROM MOVING OUT ONTO THAT BRIDGE? WHY IS THE DESIRE TO POSSESS BURNING SO PERVENTLY IN HIS VEINS? AND NAHEMMA, SHE IS LIKE SOME SYMBOLIC LIFE-FORM WHOSE CREATION AND PURPOSE HAS BEEN LOST IN THE PASSAGE OF TIME. WHY IS THAT?



FOLLOW ME, DAVID WINTERS, FOR OUR MEETING IS PREORDAINED.

I SENSE THE FEAR THAT CUTS YOUR HEART! IT MINGLES WITH YOUR DESIRE FOR ME! BUT FIRST YOU MUST COME TO ME.



CROSS THE BRIDGE, MY SWEET, AND THEN YOU CAN HAVE ME. JUST A FEW SHORT STEPS; IGNORE THE DISTANT SOUND OF THE RUSHING WATER FAR BELOW.

HAS THIS SCENE PLAYED BEFORE DAVID? DO YOU PERCEIVE ITS ORIGINS? EVEN THROUGH YOUR FEAR, THE THOUGHT TANTALIZES YOU! BUT THE PARTS HAVE BEEN SWITCHED. YOU DO REALIZE THAT, DON'T YOU? YOU PLAY THE ROLE YOU ONCE METED OUT!



HARRIET STONE HAD PLAYED THE GAME, FOLLOWING THE PRESCRIBED FORMULA, INCLUDING ALL THE TENTATIVE MOVES AND DOUBLE ENTENDRES.

SHE HAD PLAYED THE GAME AND PLAYED IT WELL, TRYING TO REMAIN AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THAT WAS ALL IT WAS...A GAME.

IT HAD BEEN THE COMMON NEED, THE ONE TRAIT THAT LINKED THEM, WHICH HAD FINALLY COMPLETED THE CHARADE.



SHE HAD HEARD HERSELF UTTERING WORDS THAT WERE SCHOOL-GIRL TEXT WORDS SHE HAD KNOWN BETTY FRIEDAN WOULD FROWN UPON; AND SHE FELT ALTERNATE SENSATIONS, A MINGLING OF NEED WITH A FEELING OF FAILURE.

HONEY, YOU'RE REALLY FINE. YOU KNOW THAT?

DAVID, I'M.... I'M NOT SO SURE!



THE SOFT, MELLOW SOUNDS OF FRANK SINATRA CROONING LOST LOVE IN THE BACKGROUND HAD ADDED THE FINAL TOUCH TO THE SCENE. SHE HAD WONDERED HOW MANY SUCH SCENES HAD BEEN PRESIDED OVER, VOCALLY, BY THE KING.

LISTEN, WE BOTH NEED IT, RIGHT? YOU KNOW YOU REALLY WANT THIS.

AND SHE HAD STILL KNOWN THAT IT WAS ONLY A GAME, BUT THERE WAS ONE SLIGHT CHANGE. SHE HAD BEEN WISHING THAT PART OF IT COULD BE...REAL.

NO ONE'S GOIN' TO HURT YOU, HONEY. THAT'S NO JIVE.

RIGHT NOW, I WANT YOU, BABY!

I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE HURT, THAT'S ALL.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN DAVID, I JUST WANT SOME PART OF ME LEFT, SOME PART OF ME THAT'S MINE ALONE.



THE WIND LIFTS, CARRYING NAHEMAH'S CARRESSING VOICE TO HIM, THE WORDS A CHANTING MOCKERY AS THE GAPING OASM BELOW GRIPS AT THE CENTER OF WINTER'S STOMACH.

HOW MANY SONGS HAVE YOU LISTENED TO, YET NEVER HEARD THE LYRICS?

YET, THERE IS A POWER GREATER THAN THAT OF THE YAWNING ABYSS; AND IT IS MIRRORED IN NAHEMAH'S EYES, A KINDLING SPARK THAT DISRUPTS THE NIGHT AIR AND SEARS HIS FLESH, SOME BASIC PART OF HIM FIGHTS TO RETAIN HIS IDENTITY.

WHAT WHISPERED HOPES ENFLAMED ON YOUR COVENANT WASHED TO DYING EMBERS?

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?... SERMONETTES?

THAT'S ONE DAMNED THING I DON'T NEED SISTER! YOU BROADS ARE ALL ALIKE!

BUT YOU..... YOU'RE THE FREAKIEST WITCH I'VE EVER SEEN!

HOT WITCH, DAVID!

HAVEN'T YOU REALIZED YET WHAT I AM? DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT I REPRESENT?

OR ARE YOU NOT AWARE SUCH BEINGS AS I EXIST ON THE PERIPHERAL EDGES OF YOUR WORLD... OR PERHAPS SUCH KNOWLEDGE WOULD SHATTER YOUR FRAGILE PHILOSOPHY, DEAR SWEET DAVID!

WINTER'S HEART LURCHES CRAZILY IN HIS CHEST, SLAMMING HIS BLOOD FIERCELY TO HIS HEAD. HIS HANDS GRASP AT AIR, AND HIS BODY SWAYS WITH THE BREEZE, WAVERING, THE DARKNESS PATIENTLY AWAITING HIS ARRIVAL WHILE NAHEMAH STANDS ALOOF AND UNATTAINABLE.

HARRIET HAD SEEN THE MECHANISMS AT WORK. SHE HAD KNOWN WHAT FUNCTIONS EACH MOVEMENT WINTERS SUPPLIED MEANT. YET, SHE HAD IGNORED THEM, DESIRING INSTEAD A TIME OF RELIANCE TO SELF-RELIANCE. SHE DESERVED THAT MUCH, SHE HAD SOOTHED HERSELF, AWARE THERE WOULD COME A TIME WHEN SHE WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR THAT CONVENIENCE.

WHY DO YOU
HAVE TO USE
PEOPLE?

GET IT THROUGH YOUR
THICK SKULL, BABY.... I
COULDN'T HAVE USED
YOU IF YOU HADN'T
WANTED TO BE USED!

YOU COULDN'T WANT TO
BE USED? YOU KNOW WHAT
IT IS, YOU LIVE IN YOUR
PRECIOUS FAIRY TALE
WORLD, WITH YOUR
GUIDING STARS AND THAT
SILLY SORCERESS'
BLADE!

AND YOU KEEP
NURTURING THAT
SALVING DELUSION
THAT EVERY-ONE'S
GOT IT BETTER THAN
YOU SO THAT YOU
DON'T HAVE TO FRET
ABOUT BRING
BELOW STANDARD!!!

THAT HAS NOTHING
TO DO WITH USING
PEOPLE!

THEY'RE A NICE COMMODITY,
BUT I PAID FOR IT AND I KNEW
THE MERCHANDISE I WAS
BUYIN'! SO DON'T GO GET
RIGHTEOUS..

I HATE
YOU!

WE'LL SEE
IN AROUND, BABY.
HUH?

JUST A FAIRY
TALE WORLD, HUH,
MR. KNOW-IT-ALL!

WELL, I'LL SHOW
YOU JUST HOW
MUCH A FAIRY TALE
WORLD IT IS..

I'M GIVING
YOU JUST ONE
MORE CHANCE, YOU
CONCEITED BEAST.
AND THEN I'LL SHOW
YOU JUST HOW MUCH
FANTASY IT IS..

YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT THE ATHAME
CAN DO. WHAT
POWER IT HOLDS.

THE BLADE THAT
INSCRIBES THE
MAGIC CIRCLE THAT
WILL ALLOW ME TO
CONTACT THE
DAUGHTERS OF
HECATE....

... WHICH WILL
CALL FORTH THE MOST
DAMNING OF SUCCUBAE
INTO MY BODY, WAITING
TO BE UNLEASHED,
WAITING FOR....
VENGEANCE!

WINTERS HOVERS AT THE BRINK WITH DEATH AND LIFE WAITING ON THE SIDES. HE HAS NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO DEATH BEFORE AND YET THERE IS STILL A CURIOUS SENSATION THAT IT IS HAPPENING TO SOMEONE ELSE.



A TENTATIVE STEP. THE FEAR STILL CLUTCHING AT HIS INSIDES, AND HIS BALANCE IS RESTORED.



THE TERROR SUBSIDES IN HIS BREAST AS HE CONTINUES ACROSS THE TERMITE AND WEATHER-EATEN BRIDGE.



NAHEMAH'S UNEARTHLY BEAUTY RESLIVES ITS HOLD. HE HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HER BEFORE, YET AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS KNOWN SEPARATE PARTS OF HER.

HER BREATH IS WARM AND EXOTIC. HER SCENT FILLS HIS NOSTRILS. HER TOUCH IS ELECTRIC, AND THESE ARE EMOTIONS HE CANNOT COMPREHEND.

HE WANTS TO RUN; HE WANTS TO CONQUER HER. FOR ONE PIERCE MOMENT, AS HE GRAPS THE UNEARTHLY BEAUTY TO HIM, HE REGAINS HIS FORMER CONFIDENCE AND CLUTCHES HER BRUTALLY.



DO YOU KNOW OF THE EMPUSAE? ANCIENT AND LOVING FEMALE DEMONS SUMMONED FORTH WITH THE ATHAME BLADE!

YOU DESIRE TO KNOW MANY WOMEN. NOW KNOW THE ULTIMATE WOMAN!

HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD OF NAHEMAH? PRINCESS OF ALL SUCCUBAI! WE WHO HAVE THE ABILITY TO ENTER MORTAL FORM! I WHO HAVE BEEN ETHERIAL FOR SO MANY CENTURIES NOW SUMMONED FORTH TO INHABIT MORTAL FRAME. I WHO HAVE MISSED THE SCENT OF TREES, THE PHYSICAL TOUCH, HAVE NOW RETURNED TO ACCOMPLISH A MISSION!

HIS COMMAND IS SHORT-LIVED, FOLLOWED WITH A LAUGHTER THAT WHIPS ON THE COLD NIGHT WIND AND TEARS AT HIS EARS.

WITH THE POWER TO TURN YOUR LUST...



SATIN FLESH TURNS TO SCALEY COILS BENEATH HIS FINGERS. SOFT WARMTH BLENDS TO SERPENTINE CHILL.

.... TO REVELSION!



THE CHANGE SHREDS WINTER'S SANITY. HIS ENTIRE BEING RIPPED OPEN AND EXPOSED WITH A MIND THAT SEEKS DESPERATELY TO COMPREHEND WHAT CANNOT BE COMPREHENDED.



OH, SACRED DAUGHTER
OF HEKATE, PRINCESS OF
THE SUCCUBAI....



COME FORTH INTO
THIS WORLD OF
PLASTIC....



COME FORTH INTO THIS
WORLD OF OVER-POPULATION
WHERE LONELINESS AND
ALIENATION ARE DEEPER
THAN EVER.



AND FEEL THE
HURT OF YOUR FLESH AND
BLOOD SISTERS AS YOU
ENTER MY BEING, FEEL THAT
HURT AND SEEK
JUSTIFICATION.



I AM
HERE, HARRIET
STONE.

I CAN SENSE
IT, MY MIND IS
ONE WITH YOURS
THEY MINGLE.



YOU MUST RELAX
AND LET ME TAKE
POSSESSION. ALL READY
I BEGIN TO REALIZE THE
SENSATIONS I HAVE
MISSED SO MANY YEARS.
THROUGH YOUR FINGERS
I NOW HAVE TOUCH
BUT SOON IT WILL BE
MY TOUCH.

NOT YET, HE
MUST HAVE ONE
MORE CHANCE. IF HE
DOES NOT RELENT,
THEN I WILL LET YOU
TAKE FULL POSSESSION.
BUT YOU WILL NOT
LIKE THIS WORLD.



YOU SAY IT IS IMPERSONAL,
BUT THERE ARE SO MANY
OF YOU.

YES, BUT IT IS
THAT WAY AND CRUEL.
I SOMETIMES WONDER
HOW ANYONE CAN
WANT TO LIVE IN THIS
JUNGLE, THIS SOOT
AND GRIME.



BUT NOW YOU
ARE WITHIN ME, SISTER,
AND I FEEL A ONENESS
WITH YOU.



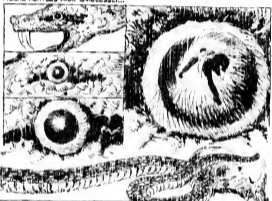
NAHEMAM EXULTS IN THE PANIC SHE CAUSES. SIBILANT HISSES SPLIT THE AIR IN SERPENTINE LAUGHTER.

SHE IS ALIVE ONCE MORE, EVEN THE
ESSENCE OF FOULED AIR TINGLES AT
HER NOSTRILS... AND HE KNOWS
A FEAR BORN OF THE
ANCIENTS!



COLD, REPTILIAN EYES WATCH WITH A SLINT OF AMUSEMENT AS THE BROKEN MALE
FIGURE HURTTLES AWAY CARELESSLY...

AND THEN SHE RELEASES HIM, BONES
SNAPPED ALONG WITH SPIRIT.



AND FALLS OVER THE EDGE OF EARTH,
COLLIDING HARD AGAINST THE GROUND AND
THEN FALLING OUTWARD, SPINNING, INTO
THE RUSH OF AIR, HURTLING TOWARD HIS
DEATH.

THE MALE HUMAN'S SCREAMS FADE QUICKLY.
THE ONLY TESTIMONY TO THE EVENTS IS THE
BROKEN AND MANGLED BODY ON THE ROCKS
BELOW. THE RIVER WATER DOES NOT CEASE.



IT WAS ALL
SO HORRIBLE....

I SHOULDN'T HAVE
DONE IT, NAHEMAH!
WHY DID YOU LET ME
DO IT?

YOU ALWAYS COMPLAIN,
HARRIET STONE! YOU BASK
IN YOUR SELF-MADE
REALITY OF MISERY AND
SELF-PITY!

SELF-PITY! NO!
YOU'RE WRONG!
I WAS JUSTIFIED!

BUT I WAS USED!
I DID NOT MAKE THAT
UP!

AGREED IN *THIS*
INSTANCE, BUT IT IS
NOT THE MOMENTARY
SELF-PITY THAT IS DESPICABLE.
IT IS THOSE WHO MAKE A LIFE-
STYLE OF CURSING OTHERS
FOR THEIR FAILURES!

GIVE ME
BACK MY BODY,
NAHEMAH!!

WANT OF YOUR
RACE JUSTIFY THEIR
UNSPOKEN, NEARLY
UNALTERABLE RULE.
THAT THEY ARE
DETERMINED TO SEEK
THEIR OWN BRAND
OF HELL!

YOU WHO ARE NEVER
CONTENT, WHO ARE CONSUMED
BY JEALOUSY AND VIEW OTHERS
AS BEING THE CHOSEN ONES!
**WASTING YOUR LIVES ON
HELLISH NIGHTMARES!!!**

I AM AFRAID THAT IS
IMPOSSIBLE, IF YOU HAD
BEEN UNABLE TO TOUCH
ANYTHING FOR CENTURIES,
YOU WOULD KNOW WHAT I
MEAN! NOW I CAN TASTE, I CAN
FEEL, THERE ARE OTHER MEN
OUT THERE OF DIFFERENT
CALIBERS THAN THIS ONE I
JUST SLEW. I WILL KNOW
SOME OF THEM, THEY WILL
COME TO ME!

IF I ALLOWED YOU BACK,
YOU WOULD CONTINUE TO
DREAM, DREAMS OF DESPAIR.
YOU WOULD NOT ENJOY
THESE SENSATIONS... **YOU
WOULD CONTINUE TO
WAIL YOUR SAD-EYE
SYMPHONY: VERSES
RHYMED TO CONSOLE
ONLY YOURSELF!**

BUT BELIEVE ME
HARRIET, I SHALL ENJOY
EACH PERCEPTION.

I REALLY
SHALL!!!

JUST A LITTLE LESSON
TAKEN OUT OF THE ARCHIVES,
FIEND READERS, SO
REMEMBER, THE NEXT TIME
YOU'RE OUT ON THE STREETS
SEEKING TO USE SOMEONE,
IT JUST MIGHT BE SOMEONE
THAT WILL USE YOU! SWEET
FANTASIES!!!

LONG NIGHTS OF INTENSE INVESTIGATION AND SEARCHING FINALLY BEAR FRUIT AS TWO PRIESTS OF THE VILLAGE OF ALBA LULIA IN TRANSYLVANIA CLOSE IN UPON ONE OF THE UNDEAD, TRAPPING HIM WITHIN THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT BUILDING.



THERE, MONSIGNOR... IN THE DOORWAY... THE VAMPIRE THAT HAS TERRORIZED OUR VILLAGE!

OUR QUEST IS SUCCESSFUL. THE MONSTER IS TRAPPED. WITH THE LORD'S HELP FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

AURALEON



HE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE. HURRY! WE MUST NOT LOSE HIM THIS TIME.

DON'T WORRY. IT SHALL BE HIS FINAL ESCAPE ATTEMPT. FOLLOW HIM.

THE ANCIENT STONE FLOOR RESOUNDS LOUDLY TO THE VAMPIRE'S POUNCING FEET. FOOTPRINTS IN DUST UNDISTURBED FOR YEARS LEAVE A CLEAR TRAIL...



THE CRY OF THE DHAMPIR

...WHICH LEADS, NEVITABLY, TO A HIGH CEILINGED ROOM WITH THE ONLY DOOR BLOCKED BY THE PRIESTS.



SPAWN OF SATAN! YOUR SOUL, DAMNED FOR ALL ETERNITY, WILL SOON GROVEL FOREVER IN THE FIERY PITS OF HELL.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ANOTHER TYPICAL VAMPIRE EPIC, YOU SAY... WHERE YOU KNOW BEFOREHAND EACH MOVE OF THE CHARACTERS ... AND THE END COMES DEEP IN SOME ANCIENT CATACOMB WHERE THE DOCTOR ROUNDS THE CLICHÉ-RIDDEN STAKE DEEP INTO THE VAMPIRE'S BUGLED HEART. NO... NOT THIS TIME. A BREATH OF FETID AIR DIRECT FROM LEFT FIELD WILL SOON OVERTHROW ALL THE CLICHES AND CARRY WITH IT THE UNEXPECTED CRY OF THE DHAMPIR.



ART BY AURALEON / STORY BY JOHN JACOBSON

YOU TALK TOO MUCH, MAN OF GOD. DO YOU REALLY THINK YOUR TRACKING SKILL FOUND ME?



A QUICK JERK OF THE BELL ROPE RELEASES A CUNNINGLY PREPARED TRAP DOOR IN THE FLOOR, SENDING THE STARTLED PRIESTS FALLING INTO THE CELLAR...



AN IRONIC END FOR VAMPIRE KILLERS... IS IT NOT?

COULD IT BE THAT I WANTED YOU TO FIND ME?



DON'T WASTE YOUR EFFORT, BYRON. I AM ALREADY ONE OF THE UNDEAD... AS YOU WELL KNOW.



YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED? YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO LIVE... AND SO TELL OTHERS.



DAEGGA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE... SO FAR FROM YOUR... HOME?

WHILE IN THE FORM OF A BAT I WITNESSED YOUR FLIGHT FROM THE PRIESTS. I SAW YOU TRAPPED IN THIS BUILDING AND ENTERED IN HOPES OF PROVIDING SOME HELP. I HAVE NO LOVE FOR WOULD-BE VAMPIRE KILLERS, BUT BEFORE I COULD COME TO YOUR RESCUE YOU SPRANG YOUR LITTLE TRAP DOOR AND SENT THEM TO AN ALLEGED HEAVENLY REWARD.

AND A CLEVER TRAP IT WAS, TOO. THOSE PRIESTS WERE MAKING MY SURVIVAL INCREASINGLY PERILOUS. I RIGGED THIS TRAP LAST NIGHT AND ALLOWED THEM TO FOLLOW ME TONIGHT. BUT... AGAIN... WHY ARE YOU HERE?



THE ANSWER IS DRAMATICALLY PROVIDED AS DAEGGA LEADS BYRON TO ANOTHER ROOM OF THE ANCIENT BUILDING.

IF YOU HAD GIVEN THIS BUILDING A GOOD GOING OVER BEFORE PREPARING YOUR TRAP, YOU WOULDN'T ASK THAT QUESTION. LOOK THERE.



A COFFIN? WHOSE? IT'S NOT ONE OF MINE. YOURS THEN?

NO...NOT MINE THE OWNER IS STILL IN THE COFFIN... COMPLETELY DESTROYED... ANNIHILATED... RETURNED TO THE FINEST ASH. HE WAS DESTROYED SO SUDDENLY THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO RESIST, LOOK AT HOW UNRUFFLED THE CLOTHING IS.

BUT WHAT KILLED HIM? I SEE NOTHING OF DANGER TO US HERE.

YOU KNOW WELL OF THE HIGH NUMBER OF VAMPIRE DEATHS DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, BYRON.

YES, I'VE HEARD STORIES... FILTERED THROUGH GOSSIPY OLD WOMEN. BUT I PAID THEM NO HEED.

A VAMPIRE BY THE NAME OF VLADIMIR CAME TO ME A FEW MONTHS AGO WITH A THEORY THAT THE DEATHS WERE NOT RANDOM, BUT CAUSED BY ONE AGENCY. SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION, HE CAME TO THIS VILLAGE. WHEN I CAUGHT UP TO HIM HE HAD ALREADY BEEN DESTROYED. THIS IS WHAT REMAINS OF HIM.

DAEGSA UNBOLTS THE SHUTTER TO THE WINDOW. IT SWINGS OPEN, GIVING AN UNRESTRICTED VIEW OF THE VALLEY IN WHICH IS LOCATED THE VILLAGE. SOUNDS OF MUSIC AND GAIETY FLOAT UP FROM BELOW.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT DESTROYED HIM?

WAGER ANYTHING? EVEN YOUR EXISTENCE?

THIS...THING... PLACES US IN DANGER ANYWAY. WILL YOU COME WITH ME...TO THE CIRCUS...IF ONLY TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND?

IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE, FAIR VAMPIRE. IT WILL BE AN INTERESTING CHANGE FOR ME. TOO LONG HAVE I CONSORTED ONLY WITH CREATURES OF THE NIGHT, CUT OFF FROM ALL HUMAN FRIVOLITY. THE LAUGHTER OF RED BLOODED CHILDREN SHALL DO MY SOUL GOOD.

THERE IS A CIRCUS AT THE EDGE OF TOWN... THE SAME CIRCUS WAS AT EACH VILLAGE IN WHICH A VAMPIRE WAS DESTROYED. IT IS MORE THAN COINCIDENCE. I'LL WAGER ANYTHING THAT OUR ENEMY IS THERE.

LAUGH NOW IF YOU MUST. I ONLY PRAY THAT YOU, AND NOT SOMETHING... ELSE... WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH.

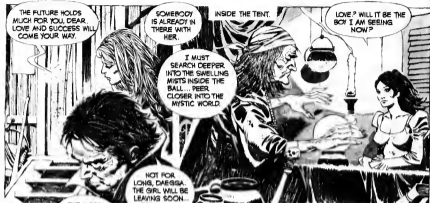
SOON, AT THE CIRCUS, BYRON AND DAEGSA ARE SURROUNDED BY THE UNFAMILIAR SIGHTS OF HAPPY CROWDS OF PEOPLE OUT FOR A NIGHT'S FUN.

THE ANSWER IS HERE. BUT HOW CAN WE FIND IT AMONG THESE HIDEOUSLY NOISY CROWDS OF PEOPLE.

WE NEED PRIVACY. ONLY IN SOLITUDE CAN WE USE OUR POWERS SAFELY.

TRYPHENIA! GIPSY FORTUNE TELLER! SEE WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR YOU! YOUR DESTINY IN THE TEA LEAVES

THE GIPSY...HER TENT WOULD BE DARK AND QUIET. THERE WOULD BE NO INTERRUPTION AS WE... PUT HER TO THE QUESTION.



DESSA DOES NOT SPEAK. HER WILL ARCS THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM AND ENTERS THE GYPSY'S MIND ON A BEAM OF POTENT MENTAL ENERGY...



...PROBING WITH GENTLE YET FORCEFUL WISPS OF POWER AMONG THE CLUTTERED MEMORIES OF A NOMADIC LIFE.



WHAT...WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU... INSIDE ME... A PART OF ME... HOW?

SLOWLY THE RANDOM PARTS OF AN ANCIENT MEMORY ARE JOINED TOGETHER.



IT WAS ALL SO LONG AGO... IT WAS YESTERDAY. HE IS GROWN NOW... BUT THAT CAN'T BE... HE IS NOT YET BORN...

I AM EXPECTING OUR FIRST CHILD, BUT THE COMING OF NIGHT BRINGS NO THOUGHTS OF PLEASURE, BUT ONLY VISIONS OF TERROR...



...NOT TERROR OF THE UNBORN, BUT TERROR...



... OF THE UNDEAD!!!



HIS MOUTH... HIS TEETH, SO LONG, SHARP... BUT I CAN DO NOTHING... HE HAS BEEN HERE BEFORE... AND EACH TIME I FALL MORE UNDER HIS POWER...



WAIT...WHAT IS THE MATTER... WHY IS HE TURNING AWAY?



IT IS MY HUSBAND!

DON'T WORRY. IT'S ALL
RIGHT. THE EVIL IS DESTROYED.
YOU ARE SAFE.

PLEASE STAND ASIDE
... QUICKLY. THIS
OPPORTUNITY... SO
RARE... CANNOT BE
LIGHTLY DISMISSED.

YOUR HELP IN
THIS MATTER HAS BEEN
MOST WELCOME. BUT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO
MY WIFE, IF I MAY
ASK?

WE ARE CREATING
A WEAPON FOR THE
LORD'S BATTLE AGAINST
THE FORCES OF
DARKNESS.

YOU, YOUNG LADY, ARE
RARE... A PREGNANT WOMAN WHO
HAS BEEN VISITED BY A VAMPIRE AND
SURVIVED. ADDING TO THE VAMPIRIC
RESIDUE IN YOUR BLOOD THE POWER
OF GOD ADMINISTERED BY
THESE RITES WILL INSURE...

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN? I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

...THAT YOUR
OFFSPRING WILL HAVE
THE SUPERNATURAL
POWER TO DESTROY
VAMPIRES AT A TOUCH.

YOUR FAMILY WILL
BECOME BLESSED IN THAT
A MEMBER WILL BE IN THE
FOREFRONT OF THE LORD'S
BATTLE AGAINST THE
FORCES OF SATAN... HE
WILL BE A... DRAMPAIR.

WHAT I HAD HEARD PRAYED ON MY MIND FOR
THE REST OF THE NIGHT. I TOSSED AND
TURNED AND WAS UNABLE TO GET ANY
SLEEP. NOW UNBELIEVABLE THAT I WAS TO
BE AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD.

WE ARE
HONORED AND
THANKFUL, FATHER.

THE ROOM IS OPPRESSIVE. THE
VAMPIRE HAS BEEN DESTROYED...
BUT AN AURA OF EVIL STILL CLINGS
TO THIS WAGON...

...HOVERING OVER ME...WAITING
FOR A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS...



PRETTY WORDS,
GIPSY WOMAN, BUT
I AM NOT YET
DESTROYED.



BUT I AM TOO WELL
PROTECTED, YOU SHALL
NEVER GET BY THIS.



AAAAHHH!!!!

YOU TOOK ME
BY SURPRISE,
VAMPIRA, BUT THE
FORCES OF EVIL
CANNOT LONG KEEP
THE FORCES OF
GOOD AT BAY.



I KNOW ALL
I NEED TO KNOW
...AND YOU KNOW
TOO MUCH.

THAT WILL
BE TAKEN CARE
OF SHORTLY,
HELLSPAWN!



AAAAH, MY
HEAD! HELP ME,
SOMEONE!!!

DESPERATION LENDS STRENGTH
TO DAEGBA AS SHE FLINGS A
HEAVY PAIR OF BOOTS AT THE
ADVANCING WOMAN.

WHA...!



...TAKEN CARE
OF... YES, BY
ME!!!



HELP ME!!!
HEL...!!!

AS DREGGA KNEELS BY THE DEAD WOMAN AND SATISFIES HER UNHOLY THIRST THE REAR DOOR OPENS.

A MOMENT'S GLANCE INTO THE HATE-FILLED EYES OF THE YOUNG MAN SHOWS DREGGA THAT SHE IS CONFRONTED BY THE...



MOTHER!!!

...DHAMPIR!!!



MONSTER!!! THIS OLD WOMAN NEVER HURT YOU.

GIVE CHASE. DESTROY HER BEFORE SHE ESCAPES.



SHE BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS WORLD DIDN'T SHE?



I MUST EXTINGUISH THE FIRE FIRST BEFORE IT SPREADS. THEN I'LL HUNT HER DOWN, AND SHE WILL NOT ESCAPE MY VENGEANCE.

DREGGA RUNS THROUGH THE TWISTING ALLEYS OF THE CIRCUS, BLIND TO EVERYTHING BUT THE THOUGHT OF ESCAPE. UNTIL...



AWHH! BYRON! THE MONSTER IS...

DON'T WASTE TIME WITH TALK. I KNOW EVERYTHING. I ESTABLISHED A MENTAL LINK WITH YOU. WE MUST LEAVE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

THEIR ESCAPE IS INTERRUPTED WHEN A MAN STUMBLES FROM THE SHADOWS AND...



VAMPIRE! THERE'S A VAMPIRE LOOSE IN THE CIRCUS GROUNDS. THIS GIRL IS DEAD... ALL HER BLOOD DRAINED.



THAT GIRL... THE ONE YOU LURED OUT OF THE GYPSY'S WAGON.

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT ME TO DO WITH HER... I COULDN'T LET HER GO. NOW COULD IT IF WE PLAY THINGS RIGHT, THIS MAY WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE...

...WITH EVERYONE RUNNING TO SEE WHAT THE COMMOTION IS WE'LL HAVE A CLEAR ROUTE OF ESCAPE.

MUST YOU LEAVE THE CIRCUS SO SOON, VAMPIRES. IT REALLY IS THE HIGH SPOT OF VILLAGE SOCIAL LIFE FOR THE YEAR.

AHHH!
BYRON!!!

I KNOW.
IT'S THE
DHAMPIR.

YOU REALLY MUST LET ME
SHOW YOU AROUND, HERE...
TAKE MY HAND.

OUT OF HER MIND WITH FEAR, DAEGGA GRIPS BYRON AS TIGHTLY AS SHE CAN, PREVENTING HIM FROM TAKING ANY ACTION AGAINST THE DHAMPIR.

YOU'VE COMPLETELY LOST
CONTROL, DAEGGA. I HAVE
NO CHOICE. ALL IS LOST
FOR ME, UNLESS...

DO
SOMETHING,
BYRON. HE'LL
KILL ME...
US...

GET A HOLD OF
YOURSELF, DAEGGA.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING
UNTIL YOU RELEASE ME
FROM YOUR
STRANGLEHOLD.

INTO THE
WOODS. CATCH
AND DESTROY
HIM
QUICKLY.

...I SACRIFICE
YOU!!!

A STRONG LEAP CARRIES BYRON
OVER THE STONE WALL INTO THE
DARKNESS OF THE WOODS
BOARDERING THE CIRCUS.

WHICH
WAY DID
THE OTHER
ONE GO?

'TIS A PITY, DAEGGA DEAR,
BUT YOU LOST YOUR HEAD AT
THE MOMENT YOU NEEDED IT
MOST. BUT YOU GAVE ME THE
EXTRA FEW SECONDS I NEED
TO COMPLETE MY ESCAPE.

BYRON!!!
NO!!!

NO...NOT IN THE WOODS
...ABOVE THE WOODS.

THE SUDDEN MID-AIR ATTACK CATCHES BYRON
COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.

I'M SAFE FOR THE
MOMENT, THE DHAMPIR,
CAN'T REACH ME WHILE
I'M IN THE FORM OF
A BAT.

BUT THE DHAMPIR, A SUPERNATURAL
BEING WITH THE BLOOD OF VAMPIRES
FLOWING IN HIS VEINS, HAS RESOURCES
TO DRAW UPON THAT BYRON COULD
NEVER GUESS.

A SATANIC MIRACLE THROWS BYRON
CLEAR OF THE IMPACT BEFORE THE
DHAMPIR'S TALONS CAN SINK INTO HIS
BODY.

TWISTING AND TURNING IN THE SKY
ABOVE THE CIRCUS, BYRON RAPIDLY
TIRES. EACH SWIPE OF THE DEADLY
TALONS COMES CLOSER...

...UNTIL...

YOU ...
DHAMPIR ... ALSO
THE GREAT BIRD
THAT ATTACKED
ME?

YES. HALF OF MY
HERITAGE IS VAMPIRE AND
I HAVE MANY OF YOUR
POWERS... WHICH MAKES
ME UNBEATABLE.

BUT ENOUGH
TALK. I AM DELAYING
MY HOLY MISSION...
THE DESTRUCTION OF
ALL VAMPIRES.

WAIT... SPARE ME...
I CAN BE OF USE TO YOU...
INFORMATION ON OTHER
VAMPIRES... IF YOU LET
ME LIVE.

IT'S ALWAYS INTERESTING TO HEAR WHAT THE VAMPIRES WILL OFFER ME IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LIVES...AS I ADVANCE FOR THE FINAL...

...KILL!!!

BLAME!

ANOTHER VAMPIRE WHO WON'T BE BOTHERING GOD-FEARING FOLK AGAIN.

YOU'VE LUCKY, YOUNG MAN. IN ANOTHER SECOND YOU'D HAVE BEEN DONE IN.

THE SILVER BULLET DID ITS JOB WELL.

OUR VILLAGE HAS BEEN BOTHERED LATELY BY A VAMPIRE. WE BANDED TOGETHER IN SECRET TO PREPARE WEAPONS AGAINST THIS CREATURE. WHEN THE ALARM WAS GIVEN TONIGHT WE WERE READY TO GO INTO ACTION.

SILVER BULLET? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH SILVER BULLETS AT THE CIRCUS?

WE SAW HIM FROM AFAR CHANGING INTO HUMAN FORM FROM A GREAT WHITE DEVIL BIRD. ONLY THOSE IN LEAGUE WITH THE DEVIL HAVE SUCH POWERS.

SLOWLY THE CROWD DISPERSES. THE HOUR IS LATE AND THE VILLAGERS BEGIN RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES.

A SUPT SOUND... BYRON SPINS AROUND.

HA! HA! HA! YES DHAMPIR... YOU DID HAVE MANY OF MY POWERS... AND ALSO ONE OF MY WEAKNESSES... SILVER WAS AS DEADLY TO YOU AS IT IS TO ME.

YOU? THE DHAMPIR'S GIRLFRIEND. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT YOU'D HAVE ENOUGH SENSE TO GET OF THE AREA.

AN INCREDIBLE ACT... YOU ACTUALLY HAD HIM DESTROYED. YOUR KIND WILL SING SONGS OF THIS FOR MANY CENTURIES TO COME.

YOU WON'T LIVE
TO HEAR ANY OF
THEM.

NOR YOU,
VAMPIRE!

BYRON FEELS A DEEPENING CHILL. THIS IS
NOT THE TYPICAL SCREAMING, WHIMPERING
VAMPIRE VICTIM. SHE IS TOO SELF-
CONFIDENT... TOO COMPOSED.

THERE IS ONE FACT
YOU FAILED TO LEARN ABOUT
THE GYPSY WOMAN. NINE
MONTHS AFTER THE VAMPIRE
VISITED HER, SHE GAVE
BIRTH...

... TO
TWINS!!!

YOU WERE
LUCKY THIS
EVENING... VERY
LUCKY. BUT YOUR
LUCK HAS JUST
BEEN EXHAUSTED.

I AM NOT HIS LOVER...
I AM HIS TWIN SISTER...
AND A DRAMPIR LIKE
HE WAS.

IT'S ALMOST
ENOUGH TO MAKE A
GOOD VAMPIRE KILLER
HANG UP HIS STAKE
AND RETIRE.

OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM OF ARTHUR TOLTOR, AGING INVESTIGATOR OF SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA, TWO FIGURES CONVERSE IN LOW TONES. THEY ARE TOLTOR'S DAUGHTER, MARILYN AND HER HUSBAND, HENTON. WENTWORTH, THE WENTWORTHS SPEAK QUIETLY SO AS NOT TO BE OVERHEARD BY THE PATRIARCH LYING QUIETLY IN HIS BED, READING...

ARTHUR TOLTOR HAD SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF THE BIZARRE OR SUPERNATURAL. YET LATELY HIS KEEN MIND SEEMED TO WEARY UNDER THE BURDEN OF HIS ADVANCING YEARS.

THE ONCE BRILLIANT PSYCHIC INVESTIGATOR HAD BECOME OBSESSED AND THERE WAS NO WAY OF TURNING BACK THE CLOCK. HE HAD ACCUSED MARILYN'S CHILD OF BEING A DEMON SUBSTITUTE FOR HER REAL CHILD AND NO ONE BELIEVED HIM. HOW COULD THEY? HOW COULD ANYONE? HE CLAIMED THAT THE SUBSTITUTE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, JOYCE WHO HAD DIED SHORTLY AFTER MARILYN'S LITTLE GIRL WAS BORN.

EVER WONDER WHY EVERYBODY BUT YOU IS SO OUT-OF-STEP? MEET ARTE TOLTOR. HE TRIED TO TELL THEM BUT NOBODY LISTENED. WHO'D WANT TO BELIEVE THEIR LITTLE BABY IS REALLY A...

DEMON CHILD

HOW ARE YOU TODAY, FATHER?


DO YOU MEAN AM I STILL SENILE AND RAVING?

NOW ARTHUR, WOULD WE THINK SUCH A THING?

YOU WOULD IF YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD PROFIT FROM IT.



SO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME. WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO HELP YOU, YOU SENILE OLD FOOL. I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU PUT AWAY, MARILYN AND I ARE GOING TO START ENJOYING LIFE FOR ONCE BY ENJOYING ALL YOUR LOVELY MONEY.




JOYCE KNEW AND THEY KILLED HER FOR IT. DO YOU REMEMBER HOW PRETTY SHE WAS? SHE WAS ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEEDED HER, NEVER AFRAID. NOW SHE'S GONE. I REMEMBER THAT DARK DAY IT ALL BEGAN.

AND HE WENT INTO REVERE, RELIVING THE PAST...



I'M AFRAID, ARTHUR. THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE BOOK THAT SCARES ME. IT REEKS OF UNSPEAKABLE EVIL. PERHAPS WE SHOULD BURN IT WHILE WE ARE STILL ABLE.




IF ONLY I HAD LISTENED TO HER FEARS SHE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE. IT WAS IN THAT BOOK THAT WE FIRST READ OF THE CHANGELING... HOW THE LORDS OF DARKNESS STEAL HUMAN INFANTS AND LEAVE DEMONS IN THEIR PLACE.



HENTON'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE, GET THE OLD MAN TO RANT ABOUT HIS PET OBSESSION. LITTLE MARY ONCE WORKED UP HENTON COULD BRING IN WITNESSES, AND HAVE TOLTOR PUT AWAY. NO QUESTION THAT THE OLD MAN WAS IRRATIONAL... JUST GET HIM WORKED UP AND HE WOULD DO THE REST.


I'LL IGNORE THAT REMARK, ARTHUR. MARILYN AND I HAVE COME TO TRY AND CONVINCE YOU FOR THE LAST TIME THAT JOYCE DIED A NATURAL DEATH. SURELY YOU MUST REALIZE JUST HOW STRANGE YOUR STORY SOUNDS.



THE HELL YOU HAVE! ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS SEEING ME PUT AWAY SO YOU CAN GET CONTROL OF THE ESTATE. YOU'RE SO DAMN BUSY TRYING TO COMMIT ME THAT YOU CAN'T SEE THE DANGER YOU'RE IN.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN JOYCE AND I FOUND THE BOOK... OH, IF ONLY WE HADN'T...

ARTHUR, IS IT WHAT WE THOUGHT IT WAS?



YES, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF INVESTIGATING SUPERFICIAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SUPERNATURAL, WE HAVE AT LAST UNEARTHED THE GENUINE ARTICLE.



THEN SEVERAL YEARS LATER, MARILYN HAD THE BABY. JOYCE DISCOVERED THAT YOUR CHILD, YOUR LITTLE MARY, HAD FALLEN VICTIM TO THE WHIMS OF THE DARK LORDS AND WAS STOLEN AS IF FROM THE WOMB ITSELF.



THE CHANGELING IS A DEMON OF THE DARKEST PITS WHO IS LEFT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE STOLEN INFANT. IT LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE THE REAL CHILD, BUT ITS HEART IS STEEPED IN EVIL AND IT REMAINS EVER OBEDIENT TO ITS EVIL MASTERS.



WHEN JOYCE SAW THE CHANGE SHE WARNED ME ABOUT IT. SOON AFTER... THEY KILLED HER FOR WHAT SHE KNEW AND I LOST MY WIFE, THE FIRST CASUALTY IN THE HOPELESS BATTLE.



POOR MOTHER, SHE DIED SO UNEXPECTEDLY.

FATHER, PLEASE CALM DOWN. REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID...

NOT UNEXPECTEDLY. THEY KILLED HER FOR WHAT SHE KNEW. CAN'T YOU SEE THAT? WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

DAMN THE DOCTOR. HAVEN'T YOU HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID? DID YOUR MOTHER DIE IN VAIN? SHE TRIED TO WARN YOU THAT THE THING YOU'RE RAISING IS NOT YOUR CHILD. WHY DON'T YOU WANT TO SAVE THE REAL MARY?

HENTON COULD ALMOST FEEL VICTORY IN HIS GRASP TOLLOR WAS RAVING NOW, ALMOST AT THE DROP OF A HAT, NOW ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS GET SOMEONE TO WITNESS THE OLD MAN'S FRIGHTENING MENTAL DETERIORATION.

ARTHUR, MARILYN IS RIGHT, TAKE IT EASY.

FOR ONCE WE AGREE, I'D SOONER TRUST A SNAKE.

WE'RE NOT UP TO ANYTHING, BUT THEN I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BELIEVE THAT.

VERY WELL, ARTHUR, I'M CURIOUS THOUGH, YOU SPOKE OF A BOOK, YOU AND JOYCE FOUND, JUST WHAT ABOUT THIS PRICELESS AND TERRIFYING TREASURE?

DON'T PATRONIZE ME, YOU YOUNG FOOL, DO YOU THINK I'M BLIND TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK?

MORE BED TIME STORIES, HENTON? ITS CALLED SIMPLY *THE BOOK OF THE ANCIENTS*. IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE DIM BEGINNING WHEN MAN'S AWARENESS OF THE FORCES OF EVIL THAT BUZZET US FROM CRADLE TO TOMB WAS JUST TAKING SHAPE. THE BOOK REVEALED THE SECRETS OF THE AGES AND WAS PASSED DOWN THROUGH TIME TO WARN MAN OF THE DANGER.

JOYCE AND I FIRST CAME ON THE BOOK WHILE INVESTIGATING A MAN WHO DABBLED IN THE OCCULT. HE HAD TRIED TO USE THE SECRETS OF THE BOOK TO GAIN POWER. UNFORTUNATELY, THE FORCES WERE FAR TOO POWERFUL TO BE CONTROLLED, THEY DESTROYED HIM.

IT WAS IN THAT BOOK THAT WE FIRST LEARNED OF THE PLOT.

PLOT? WHAT PLOT?

LORDS OF DARKNESS... WHY I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANY SUCH BEINGS OR GODS, SOUNDS LIKE HOBGOBLINS TO ME!

WHY YOU SMIRKING JACKAL, I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU OF A DANGER THAT CONCERNS NOT ONLY YOU AND YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT ALL OF MANKIND AS WELL. HOBGOBLINS, YOU'RE A FOOL, HENTON, A VERITABLE FOOL.

THE LORDS OF DARKNESS... GRIM AND TERRIBLE DEITIES THAT WAIT ON THE EDGE OF TIME AND SPACE... CREATURES CAPABLE OF INCREDIBLE EVIL AND INSATIABLE LUSTS.



MORE, HENTON?
HOW AN OLD MAN RAVES,
EH? THE BOOK TELLS HOW
AGES AGO MAN
WORSHIPPED TERRIBLE
DEITIES. HE SURRENDERED
COMPLETELY TO THEIR
POWER AND COMMITTED
FOUL ACTS TO WIN FAVOR
IN THEIR EYES.

GOODS THAT WERE
AT THE SAME TIME
SUPREMELY POWERFUL AND
COMPLETELY CORRUPT FIENDS
THAT REVELED IN EVERY FOUL
AND VILE ACT MAN COULD
DEVISE. THOSE THAT PRAYED
TO THEM DIED IN STRANGE AND
HORRIBLE DEATHS AND WITH
EACH NEW DEATH THE LORDS
OF DARKNESS GREW IN
POWER.

FINALLY, AFTER
YEARS OF SUFFERING,
MAN REALIZED THE
UNPARALLELED EVIL OF
HIS GODS. IT WAS THEN
HE TORE DOWN THEIR
FILTHY ALTARS AND
BANISHED THEM FROM
EARTH WITH
POWERFUL SPELLS.

IN TIME THERE WERE
OTHER RELIGIONS AND MORE
BENEVOLENT GODS TO PRAY TO.
SOON ALL THE OLD FEARS
WERE FORGOTTEN AND THE
MEMORY OF THE DARK ONES
FADED FROM MEMORY, BUT THE
ANCIENT SPELLS OF PROTECTION
WERE FORGOTTEN TOO. THUS...
THE DANGER THAT THE DARK
ONES WOULD RETURN
ANEW!





THE LORDS OF DARKNESS WERE NOT DESTROYED, ONLY FORCED TO LEAVE EARTH. THEY WAITED PATIENTLY TILL THE INCANTATIONS WERE FORGOTTEN, THE BOOK OF THE ANCIENTS HAS THOSE SPELLS AND NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM. IT IS ONLY MY KNOWING THOSE SPELLS THAT HOLDS BACK THE DARK LORDS FROM POURING BACK INTO OUR WORLD. ONLY I CAN STOP THEM, BUT I CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER.

IT WAS GOING BETTER THAN HENTON HAD HOPED. THE OLD MAN WAS CONSUMED WITH DELUSIONS OF PERSECUTION AND GRANDEUR, WITH FIENDISH GLEE HENTON PUSHED HE WANTED STILL MORE.

WHAT ARE THEY PLOTTING, ARTHUR?

WHAT'S THE USE? YOU DON'T BELIEVE A WORD I'VE SAID. THE POINT OF IT ALL IS THAT YOUR STUPIDITY AND CUPIDITY WILL DOOM ALL OF MANKIND.

THEN YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BY TELLING ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

THEY'VE NEVER FORGIVEN MAN FOR ABANDONING THEM. THEY HAVE WAITED FOR COUNTLESS YEARS TO RETURN TO EARTH AND WITH THE USE OF THE DARK POWERS, MOLD IT INTO A LIVING HELL TO SUIT THEIR PERVERSE PLEASURES.

A SMALL FIGURE LISTENED TO EVERY WORD THE ADULTS SPOKE BEHIND THE BEDROOM DOOR. SHE LISTENED CLOSELY AND WAITED.

BUT HOW, ARTHUR? HOW ARE THEY GOING TO DO IT, ARTHUR?

ARE YOU SO BLIND, HENTON? HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED IT OUT YET?

I'M AFRAID I HAVEN'T. NOT JUST YET, ANYWAY.

WITH SURPRISING STRENGTH,
TOLTOR GRIPPED HENTON'S
THIN ARM.

FIRST THEY MUST BE
RID OF ANY THAT KNOW
THEM. THAT IS WHY JOYCE
WAS MURDERED AND WHY
I AM NEXT. ONCE WE ARE GONE
THEY WILL CULTIVATE THEIR
SINISTER CULT AGAIN AND RETURN
FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER.
FOR BOTH PARTS OF THIS MASTER
PLAN, THEY NEED THE SERVICES
OF THE CHANGELINGS.

NOT
AGAIN,
PLEASE...NOT
AGAIN,
FATHER.

SURELY YOU CAN'T
EXPECT US TO
BELIEVE THAT OUR
OWN LITTLE MARY
IS A... A...

A DEVIL.

THAT'S ABSURD.
ARTHUR, MARY IS
JUST A NORMAL
LITTLE GIRL AND
NOTHING MORE.

SHE IS NOT JUST A
NORMAL CHILD. SHE IS NOT
YOUR REAL DAUGHTER, AND
SHE IS NOT MY GRANDCHILD!!!
WHAT'S MORE, THAT THING
ISN'T EVEN HUMAN. SHE'S A
CHANGELING, A DEMON LEFT
IN EXCHANGE FOR THE REAL
MARY. PLEASE SEE THAT
BEFORE THEY TAKE ME!
PLEASE!

THE FIGURE IN THE WALL OPENS THE
DOOR TO BETTER HEAR THE WORDS
SPOKEN IN HER DEFENSE. SHE KNOWS
THAT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THE OLD
MAN, NO ONE AT ALL.

THE CHANGELING
WAS LEFT WITH YOU FOR
A TWO-FOLD PURPOSE. ONE
TO SLAY THE ONLY PEOPLE
WHO KNEW A WAY TO PREVENT
THE RETURN OF THE DARK
ONES, JOYCE AND MYSELF.
THE OTHER WAS TO TWIST
YOUR EVIL TO SUIT THEIR
NEEDS. THEY WILL NEED
PEOPLE LIKE YOU... GRASPING,
SELF-CENTERED, UNSCRUPULOUS,
AND AWARICIOUS, TO SPREAD
THEIR EVIL TEACHINGS TO THE
REST OF THE WORLD.

SUPPOSE FOR ONE
MINUTE THAT I BELIEVE
YOU, WHICH OF COURSE
I DON'T. GIVE ME ONE
GOOD REASON WHY
OUR CHILD WAS TAKEN
BY YOUR HOBGOBLINS?

WHY SHOULD GODS
NEED ANY REASONS TO DO
AS THEY PLEASE? THEY ACT
WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT.
BUT THIS TIME I'M ALMOST
SURE THERE WAS A REASON FOR
SELECTING YOUR BABY.

THANKS FOR THE KIND WORDS. NOW HERE'S SOME FOR YOU. YOU'RE CRAZY, ARTHUR. IF THERE WERE THINGS LIKE THAT, THEY WOULD HAVE TAKEN OVER LONG AGO.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE WORKINGS OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS? THEY HAD TO WAIT TILL THE TIME WAS RIGHT. TILL MAN HAD FORGOTTEN ALL THE PROTECTIVE SPELLS AND THE WORLD WAS CORRUPTED BY ITS OWN STRANGLING SOPHISTICATION.



FATHER, PLEASE DON'T TALK THAT WAY ABOUT HENTON.



WHY? ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE TRUTH? OUR WORLD IS BEING TORN APART... BY WARS, CORRUPTION, HATRED, AND THE SUFFERING OF MANY. WHAT TIME IS BETTER SUITED FOR THE RETURN OF THE DARK GODS?

ARTHUR TOLTOR KNOWS HE IS FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE. WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS HE KNOWS THAT HE IS NO MATCH FOR THE POWER OF THE LORDS OF DARKNESS.



MOMMY, WHAT IS A CHANGING?



FATHER, YOU'RE SCARING MARY.



THAT'S CHANGELING, DARLING. IT'S REALLY NOTHING, JUST A STORY TO FRIGHTEN LITTLE GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN BAD.



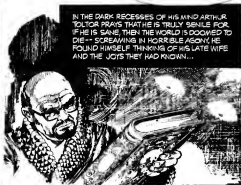
HOBGOBLINS, MARY

HEAR THAT, HELLSPAWN? YOU'VE FOOLED THEM ALL.

MOMMY?



NO ONE BELIEVES MY STORY! NOW YOU CAN KILL ME JUST LIKE YOU DID MY WIFE. YOU KNEW THAT NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT WE'D BOTH GONE SENILE. SO YOU MURDERED HER AND LET ME LIVE TO SEE IF ANYONE WOULD BELIEVE MY STORY.



THEN THE DOOR OPENED JUST FAR ENOUGH TO LET A SMALL HEAD LOOK BACK INTO THE ROOM. THE ANGELIC FACE THAT SPOKE OF EVIL AND TRIUMPH. THE GLOATING SMILE TOLD ARTHUR TOLTOR THAT HE WAS NOT SENILE, NOT AT ALL.

POOR ROSEMARY! DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE HAD TWINS?



THE CASTLE STANDS IN THE MIST OF TOWERING TREES, ITS TURRETS THRUSTING FORTH FROM THE FOLIAGE. IT BELONGS TO ANOTHER AGE. IT REFLECTS A STRANGE COMBINATION OF EARLY HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC AND A NOBLE EUROPEAN HERITAGE.

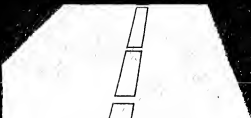
BUT THIS IS NOT TRANSYLVANIA, AND THE CASTLE STANDS NOT FAR FROM THE GREY POLLUTION-STAINED SKIES OF NEW YORK CITY. IT IS A RELIC, AND AS SUCH, IT STANDS ANONYMOUSLY AMONGST THE BIRCH AND PINE. PERHAPS WAITING TO CARRY ON A TRADITION.

THIS IS GREYSTONE CASTLE, AND IT IS VERY MUCH A TWENTIETH-CENTURY REALITY. IT STANDS ALONE AND SEEMINGLY DISCARDED. THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT AFFAIRS IN THE WORLD TODAY THAN MONUMENTS TO DAYS LONG FORGOTTEN. YET, THERE IS AN ECHO HERE OF DISTANT HORRORS.



THE VAMPIRESS STALKS THE CASTLE THIS NIGHT

AND ON NIGHTS WHEN THE ELEMENTS OF NATURE TURN CHAOTIC, THE ECHO IS MAGNIFIED, AND STILLNESS BECOMES, MORE THAN EVER, A SYMBOL OF ITS PATIENCE. THERE IS AN ODD FEELING THAT PERVADES THE AREA AND DERMES THE NATURE OF THAT NIGHT AS ANTICIPATION. THERE IS NEW PREY ABOUT.



THE WET MACADAM WHISTLES HOLLOWLY UNDER THE TIRE TREADS...



WINDSHIELD WIPERS, SWEEPING MONOTONOUSLY BACK AND FORTH, PROVIDE AN ALMOST HYPNOTIC ACCOMPANIMENT.

THE TWO PEOPLE DRIVE IN SILENCE. STATIC FROM THE RADIO BLENDS IN UNNOTICED WITH THE OTHER SOUNDS.



DONALD CARPENTER AND SANDRALEE DEVENS ARE AWARE OF THE ISOLATION ABOUT THEM.



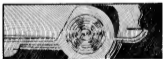
DAMN IT!!! THIS ROAD SEEMS TO GO ON FOREVER! JUST TREES AND MORE TREES!



WHAT DOES IT MATTER? WE HAVEN'T ANY REAL PLACE TO GO.

FORGET HOW THAT NIGHT SEEMS ONLY A HAZY MEMORY, REPLACED WITH A TODAY...

...HEAVY AND GREY AS THE NIGHT SKY.



FORGET THE LOST DESPAIR IN HER VOICE, DONALD CARPENTER. STOP COMPARING THAT MELANCHOLY NOTE WITH THAT HUSKY, SENSUAL VOICE WHICH WAS ONE PART OF A DISTANT NIGHT.

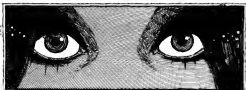


THEIR WORDS ARE HARSH IN THE QUIET AS THEY DISCUSS THEIR FLIGHT. THEY ARE BOTH SEVENTEEN. THEY ARE BOTH FRIGHTENED AS THEY BEGIN TO REALIZE THE REAL PRICE WHICH MUST BE PAID FOR ONE HUMAN BEING'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER.

THEY ARE NOT ONLY AWARE OF EACH OTHER, BUT ALSO OF THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE FLED THEIR HOMES, AND THAT SANDRA LEE DEVENS CARRIES WITHIN HER THEIR UNBORN CHILD. THE LAST REMAINING FACT LEAVES THEM COLD. THEY CAN NEVER RETURN TO WHERE THEY BEGAN.



THERE IS ONE OTHER CREATURE STIRRING THIS NIGHT.



HER NAME IS CHRISTINA GREYSTONE.



NOW SHE AWAKENS TO ANOTHER NIGHT OF SEEKING NOCTURNAL PREY.



LITHE, SEDUCTIVE, IN THE FAINT MOONLIGHT, SHE APPEARS MUCH AS SHE DID WHEN LIFE PULSED THROUGH HER VEINS.



SHE MOVES TO ONE OF THE ANCIENT WINDOWS, BARELY REMEMBERING HER PAST, CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE PRESENT, AND THE PRESENT REVEALS TWO FRAIL DARK FORMS MOVING THROUGH THE TREES TOWARD HER DOMAIN.



DONALD CARPENTER IS STILL THINKING OF THAT NIGHT. IT IS STRIPPED OF ITS ROMANTICISM NOW. ALL THAT IS LEFT IS THE UNBORN REALITY. AS THEY WALK TO THE CASTLE, AS HE HEARS HIS OWN VOICE IN THE STILLNESS, EVEN AS HE MARVELS AT THE IMMENSITY OF STONE BEFORE THEM, HE FEELS A MIXTURE OF EMOTIONS: UNCERTAINTY, MOMENTS OF HOSTILITY SPRINGING FORTH FROM A SENSE OF OPPRESSION, AND A FIERCELY PROTECTIVE SENSATION TOWARD THIS GIRL-WOMAN WHO WALKS HESITANTLY BESIDE HIM.



HELLO. MY NAME IS DONALD CARPENTER. MY CAR...UH... BROKE DOWN BACK THERE...



THE VAMPRESS CAN BARELY CONTROL HERSELF, SANDY'S SLENDER WHITE THROAT HYPNOTIZES HER, TEMPTING HER TO FORGET CAUTION. YET, CAUTION DOES NOT DESERT HER, AND COMES TO HER WITH THE CUNNING OF THE ANIMAL. SHE MANAGES TO KEEP HER VOICE FROM TREMBLING.



NOW SANDRALEE DEVENS IS WALKING THROUGH THE DIMLY LIT ROOM. PERHAPS, IF HER PAST WERE NOT SO VIVIDLY WITH HER AS SHE GAZES ABOUT, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE FORBIDDING ATMOSPHERE OF GREYSTONE CASTLE. BUT THE PAST /S/ WITH HER AND DULLS HER SENSES. SHE REMEMBERS HER FATHER'S FACE, HEARS AGAIN HIS WORDS OF THE EVENING BEFORE WHEN SHE AND TOMMY TOLD HER PARENTS ABOUT THE BABY...



WELL,
WHAT'RE YOU
GONNA DO?

YOU'D BETTER
REMEMBER THAT
YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE THAT BABY
FOR MORE THAN A
DAY. THE NOVELTY
MIGHT WEAR
OFF.

AND YOU'D
BETTER CONSIDER
THE CHANCES YOU'RE
GIVING HIM. IT'S A
TOUGH WORLD OUT
THERE, AND YOU'RE
STARTING HIM OFF
BEHIND THE
EIGHT BALL!

CHRISTINA GREYSTONE FEELS THE FAMILIAR SURGING IN HER VEINS. CARTILAGE STRETCHES AND AN ODD BIOLOGICAL REACTION BEGINS.





IN MOMENTS NOW, THE FAMILIAR SENSATION WILL OCCUR. CHRISTINA'S STRONG, THIN HANDS WILL HOLD THE YOUNG GIRL HELPLESS AS HER TEETH DIP INTO THE GIRL'S NECK, SEEKING THE JUGULAR VEIN.



FEAR BECOMES CERTAINTY. DOES IT REALLY MATTER SO MUCH, SANDRA DEVENS? DOES THE FUTURE HOLD SO MUCH PROMISE?

WHY STRUGGLE? WHY STRUGGLE FOR A LIFE SO DOUBTFUL?

HOW MUCH CAN IT HURT? IT WILL BE NO MORE THAN A MOMENT OF SEARING PAIN.

WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN IT MAKE?



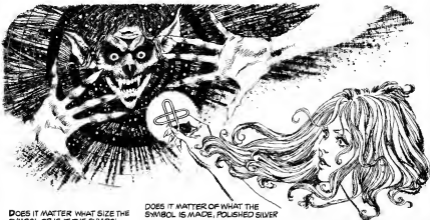
THE SCENT OF THE FEMALE VAMPIRESS IS STRONG IN HER NOSTRILS AND SNEEPS ASIDE THE SELF-PITY. YES, IT IS WORTH LIVING. THERE IS STILL PROMISE. AND SHE IS NO LONGER SURE WHETHER SHE HAS THE RIGHT TO THE DECISION OF LIFE OR DEATH NOW THAT IT IS NOT ONLY HER LIFE THAT IS THREATENED.



REMEMBER AND STRUGGLE FOR LIFE, FIGHT TO RETAIN THAT LIFE, AND GROW STRONG IN THAT FIGHT, FOR TWO LIVES, NOT ONE ARE DEPENDENT UPON THE OUTCOME.



REMEMBER THE VAMPIRE'S WEAKNESS. CROSSES! THE SYMBOL OF GOOD AS OPPOSED TO THE SYMBOL OF EVIL. BUT YOU HAVEN'T ANY SUCH CROSS, DO YOU? OR DO YOU?



DOES IT MATTER WHAT SIZE THE SYMBOL OR IS IT THE SYMBOL ITSELF WHICH IS IMPORTANT?

DOES IT MATTER OF WHAT THE SYMBOL IS MADE, POLISHED SILVER OR GOLD-PLATED BRONZE, OR IS IT THE FORM THAT IS IMPORTANT?



THE VAMPIRE'S SHRIEKS ECHO OFF THE DOMED CEILINGS IN REPLY, AND SANDRALEE DEVENS FORGETS ABOUT THE MIRACLE TAKING PLACE WITHIN HER AND WITNESSES A TRANSFORMATION THAT DEFILES ANYTHING IN HER EXPERIENCE.





DONALD CARPENTER WATCHES THAT TRANSFORMATION IN REVERSE. THE FRAGILE REALITY OF HIS MIND CAN BARELY ACCEPT THE FLUID CHANGE FROM FEMALE TO NOCTURNAL CREATURE.



A HUMOROUS THOUGHT PUTS THROUGH HIS MIND. THE TRANSFORMATION SHOULD HAVE JUMPED FROM ONE FORM TO THE OTHER AS THEY DO IN ALL THOSE SECOND-RATE DRACULA FILMS.

VIOLENT SOUNDS ECHO OFF THE SILENT WALLS: THE BEATING WINGS AGAINST THE AIR, THE DULL IMPACT OF STUMBLING FLESH, THE HIGH-PITCHED SHRILL OF THE ATTACKING SHE-CREATURE.

THERE ISN'T TIME TO WONDER HOW THIS CAN BE HAPPENING, RAZOR TEETH SHRED FLESH AND THE PAIN STIMULATES ACTION.



HE LASHES OUT, STRIKING, SOB-BING, BRIEF IMAGES OF SANDRA-LEE SOMEHOW APPEARING IN THE CONFUSION.

SOMEHOW, HE MANAGES TO GRIP THE VICIOUS FORM. HIS FINGERS ARE WET WITH BLOOD, YET HE HOLDS ONTO THE STRUGGLING, SUDDENLY FEARFUL BEING IN HIS HANDS.



IN TERROR, HE REACHES OUT FOR ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT AID HIM IN DEFEATING THIS CREATURE.



HE IS NOT EVEN AWARE OF WHAT HIS REACHING FINGERS GRASP.

THE WOODEN HANDLE OF THE FLAG-STAFF SLAMS SAVAGELY DOWN ONTO THE PULSING CHEST BELOW. OVER AND OVER, HE FEELS HIMSELF SLAMMING THAT POINT OF WOOD DOWN...



OVER AND OVER, HE HEARS THE DULL THUD OF IMPACT AND THE CREATURES ANSWERING CRIES, BLOOD, LIKE SOME GEYSER SPATTERS OVER HIM.

PERHAPS IT IS ONLY A TEMPORARY INSANITY THAT HAS HELD HIM. HE STAGGERS AWAY, NOT WANTING TO WITNESS HIS OWN SAVAGERY. THE SIGHT WILL STAY WITH HIM, HE KNOWS, LURKING JUST BEHIND HIS CLOSED EYE-LIDS.



WHAT WAS SHE?

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING OUT OF THE NIGHT. I SAW HER CHANGE INTO...

I SAW IT TOO. WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WHERE DO WE GO?



BACK OUT THERE... INTO THE DARK.



NO ONE'LL EVER BELIEVE US IF WE TELL THEM ABOUT THIS. WE COULD NEVER CONVINCE THEM.



SHHH...DON'T WORRY. WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.

I KNOW... I KNOW.

I'M SCARED.

The end

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

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Sinbad's beloved Princess Paria is reduced to an infant in height. Only a series of thefts from the egg of the monstrous Calaca will the King can restore her to normal. But the seas back to Calaca are fraught with danger - such as evil magic, malicious sailors - and the arrogant Sarg. **BW \$15.95/\$7.95 Color \$15.95/\$7.95**

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CHAPTER THREE "Hydra of Hades"

After being captured by the inhabitants of Colchis, head of the Golden Fleecce, Jason breaks free. Then, in a dream and gold slanted cave, he finds the Fleecce. But guarding it is the Hydra, a seven-headed dragon. It kills one of Jason's men and then gets after the hero himself. **BW \$15.95/\$7.95 Color \$15.95/\$7.95**

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Jason and his men grab the Fleecce and sail. But their way is barred, first by a flaming Sinbad from the sky - and second by an army of killer skeletons. These grow from the teeth of the dead Hydra. And the nine skeletons battle Jason and his men in an incredible battle. **BW \$15.95/\$7.95 Color \$15.95/\$7.95**

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Many thousand years ago, a great Prince of Egypt was buried alive. His monster, to guard the great treasures of the kingdom. Now, from the ancient sarcophagi of Egypt comes him, the ultra-mummy. And he looks to destroy the expedition that has delved his final resting place. Made in the image of Chussey. #2452/\$2.75

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Under the driving rays of the full moon, he grows! His vile fangs gleaming in the night light. From town to town he roams, preying upon the innocents he finds. Human. For this is the Wolfman, the animal in human form... from which he is called! Put him against Frankenstein in the name of Len Chussey Jr. #2456/\$2.75

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Return with us now to the days when classic radio horror dominated the airwaves. A time of shrieking doors... and unseen terrors. Relive the Suspense radio program in this exciting four-hour long set of tape cassettes featuring actual recordings of old radio programs. And starring in these vintage broadcasts are talents such as Orson Welles, Robert Taylor, and Vincent Price. The entire set sells for \$19.95... expensive, but well worth the price. Available in limited edition, so order today! #2342

DRACULA

DRACULA. Starring Orson Welles is a true masterpiece. This is the famous pronunciation of an old-time radio broadcast from Orson Welles' original (and timeless) vampire classic DRACULA. And starring in the hour-long tape recording is one of the great actors of all-time, the immortal Orson Welles. Welles has always had a special love for the unique and bizarre. His MARSHALLS WORLD program, aired some years after this recording was made, scored the delight of millions of Americans, and DRACULA is no less inspiring. Welles himself portrays the blood-thirsty Count. His performance is amazing. Welles' understanding of the tortured soul of Dracula adds a dimension to the character that has been surpassed by other monster actors. Accompanying Welles in this extravaganza are the uncredited talents of his Mercury Theater. This was a company of actors who went to work with Welles in WAR OF THE WORLDS and the popular picture CITIZEN KANE. As for this recording, it recalls the tale of Jonathan Harker who, hired by Dracula to work in his castle, attempts to transcend, and is there transformed, by the Count, into one of the Undead. It then tells how Dr. Van Helsing, a friend of the young man, to break down the dread demon Dracula and destroy him. But there are many impressions... such as the vampire's fiendish strength... not to mention his seductive female-vampire accomplices. The scene wherein Dracula seduces both Harker and other children of the night, has to be heard to be believed. Simply awesome!



THE BIRDS AND THREE SKELETON QUAY

THE BIRDS. Starring John Dehner is a superb double bill on two master radio talents. THE BIRDS is a half-hour retelling of the classic short story that became the basis for the Alfred Hitchcock film. And it is the story of a man trapped in an isolated countryside home by an ever-growing flock of deadly killer birds. THREE SKELETON QUAY relates a tale of rats, tens of thousands of the fanged creatures. The setting is a lighthouse manned by three keepers... men who watch in horror as the hairy devil-swarm onto their island from the sea. And once on the small isle, the creatures climb up the light shaft to reach... meat! This is a story of intense suspense that builds to an unbelievable climax. Vincent Price stars in this program from the libraries. Can man survive this incredibly diabolical onslaught of the beasts, bird and rat? Enough to make you hair stand on end!

DONOVAN'S BRAIN

DONOVAN'S BRAIN. Starring Orson Welles, recaptures the strange and classic tale of a ruthless financier who sleeps at night to get what he wants. And when he dies, he has his brain kept alive in a tank from which people he desires thought waves, that controlling people's minds. Originally a novel by Carl Sandburg, and later a film of the same name, this exciting science fiction tale features Dr. Don Medley as Donovan, with the all-time Mercury cast behind him. As with DRACULA, this is one of the few shows in the history of the Suspense radio program that was honored with a half-hour of air. A gripping broadcast!

THE LIFEBOAT MUTINY and THE HOUSE IN CYPRESS CANYON

THE LIFEBOAT MUTINY is a much overlooked, highly original science fiction tale about a computer. And not your ordinary computer. This one was built by a race of fiendish monsters called the Dromas. And the computer was to be used against the barbarian Rhoggenes, creatures living on another planet. But the alien race has once defied... and the computer, deadly as ever, with its alien mentality, has on... HOUSE IN CYPRESS CANYON, starring Robert Taylor, is considered the greatest single moment of horror in radio history. From the mid-1940s, this horror tale tells of a house in suburban Los Angeles... a house in which a small family has the most unimaginable monster of all-time. And it's set during the Christmas season, a time that makes the horror even more severe. Both stories are a half-hour of suspense!

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When radio was king in the late 30's and early 40's, America was scared out of its wits by Arch Oboler's "Lights Out" - A sampling of some of the best! Features the legendary tale of the Chicken Heart that drowned Lucius, the others, "Telly Terri!" #2306 DROP DEAD! \$5.98



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Bleeding terror by the master, Edgar Allan Poe. Narrated by the requested radio voice of Nelson O'Donnell. Six yarns: "Pit & Pendulum," "Cask of Amontillado," "Hound of Baskin," "Masque of the Red Death," "Strange Case of M. Valdemar," & "Tale-Tale Heart" #2315 TALES OF TERROR \$5.98



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A classic tale of the supernatural about a magical totemism with a terrifying history. A suspense thriller, and a chilling conclusion! This is the story that has inspired hundreds of anthologies in books, films & comic books. Now you can hear the genuine original! #2302 THE MONKEYS HOWL \$4.49



Famous short and horror stories read by Wayne O'Donnell, famous radio terror voice! Edited by Charles Jackson & Ambrose Bierce, namely "Owl Creek Bridge" & "The Sign of the Cross" Also, R. L. Stevenson's "The Body Snatchers" & O'Brien's "Which Was It?" #2311 SLEEP NO MORE! \$4.98



The fantastic adventures adapted from the original Motion Picture Classic! The most famous use of all time: the Empire State Building! Dance to battle in the Great Style of 1930's radio melodrama, following the exact plot of this event monster classic! #2309 KING KONG \$3.98



Music of monsters captured on a waxen disc. Eric's Operation of Sensitive Sonatas & a classic. Swells to rise near space & shudder by as the gold-wax moments of the wilting hour. Created by Lugones! #2325 PHANTOM OF THE ORGAN \$6.95

FANTASTICAL LP RECORD ALBUMS!



Remember the 1970's and HIGH CAMP in Super Heroes? Well, we've managed to get a special limited supply of this rare comedy record. A Black Super-Hero Super, suited for the strictly straight jacketed suit. Lark, loud eyes & parking spaces! of MFLI #2327 COMIC BOOK HEROES \$5.98



BELA LUGOSI in a SUSPENSE radio show from the 1940's, complete version. A definite must for fanatical Lugosi buffs (all signs of youth as it has a special spoken introduction) by Bela's own SON, BELA LUGOSI, JUNIOR! Collector's Item. Best #2326 SUSPENSE/LUGOSI \$8.95



So back and forth to sounds of the howling wind, rattling chains, screeching fingernails on the inside of coffins, maniacal laughter, and all the other usually sweet sounds of a haunted house! Great fun for parties. #2341 SOUNDS TO MAKE YOU SHIVER! \$4.98



Put on your own terror! Put on your brains! Want to be a medium medium, and hear folks with a spoon? This record by Hollywood magician and master mind master, Verne Lundgren shows you how! Fandango! #2338 DR. DRUM'S HAUNTED SEANCE \$4.45



Two 1940 radio programs, The Gypsy Diving episode, and the Black Jacket episode, wherein Little Annie and Sandy, and good ol' Doolittle was out against the death-dealing evil crooks! And he had the best of it! 60-40 in hard-to-find! Believe it! #2327 LITTLE ANNIE \$6.95



The Celebrated Case of the Firing Squad. When is Harlow, who boasts "That's the end of Tracy, baby! We won't hear of him again!" Well Even YOU should know better than that, Harlow, you shall see! Actual old-time radio show. #2332 DICK TRACY \$6.95



VOLUME ONE of two Jack Benny crawls out of his snail to help you to live (or may be live for (the) who) THE SHADOWN, THE LONE RANGER, MA PERDONS, and hilarious FRED ALLEN bits. A mostly nostalgic must! #2339 GREAT MOMENTS IN RADIO VOL. 1 \$3.98



VOLUME TWO of two. Dignified broadcasts of CLAUDETTE TERRY and THE PI-RATES, BING CRUSCH, and on the spot coverage of the Dampney Tummy fight, plus much & low entertainment package for all! #2340 GREAT MOMENTS IN RADIO VOL. 2 \$5.98



Here's 2 complete radio shows. The Masked Man and lovely Tonto help a meek look accountant beat a baron of bank embezzlers, and then protect the Telegraph Company from the evil Indians. Great action, sound effects, ancient commercials! #2334 LONE RANGER \$6.95



Two full radio adventures from 1948! Cap's colorful jewels of the Queen of Sheba and his Secret Squadron lights a test-lamp of all careers and professions! Must! The old 1940's radio commercials show are worth the price of the record! #2331 CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT \$6.95



Superman's complete origin story, from old Krypton all the way to the Daily Planet building! Hear him go whoosh through the upbuilding nostalgia era, and help the War Effort by fighting the evil and in the radio salubrious food of radio clubs, food & wonder. #2328 SUPERMAN \$6.95



Futuristic Nostalgia, this! Buck Rogers and his pal, Wally (living in the 21st Century, so they fight Black Belt, the arch-villain from Mars, and monkey around with a super-scientific Cyro-Supernova Robot-robot! Learn that space ships didn't happen till the 24th Century! Wow! #2329 \$6.95



THE MALTESE FALCON was a great story that brought death to thousands, and riches to Dashiell Hammett, and fame to Bogart. Now Bogart in another Hammett yarn, "Lady's Lovely Countess!" Two super Radio Adventures from the 1940's! #2334 MALTESE FALCON \$6.95



BORIS KARLOFF: In the greatest evil comedy of all time, Antonic & Ole Luck, Bela Lugosi shows us the 1st. Prescriptions: Death, a hundred millionaires, and a super-burglar MUST for collectors of horror and horror! #2335 BORIS AND OLE LUCK \$6.95




"Who knows what evil hides in the hearts of men?" Better believe that! Lament THE SHADOWN! Creation dies, as he takes on a whole career of evil, and ends in the radio adventure, "The Eyes of Evil" A masterpiece of suspense! 1940's giallo mystery-horror! #2328 THE SHADOWN \$6.95



This century's greatest and most-revered actor, Orson Welles, as THE SHADOWN! Telepathically, searching down the deepest forces who stand and jump on helpless natives. And only by Marge Lane & a word with Dashiell! #2333 ORSON WELLES-SHADOWN \$6.95

To order any of these items, please see last page of this magazine for convenient PLEAS ORDER FORM.



HIDE AND SEEK IN THE
CITY OF THE DEAD? TAG
AMONG THE AZTEC TOMBS? OR A
GAME FAR MORE GRAVE FOR OUR
TWO FUGITIVES FACING A GHOSTLY
PROCESSION OF THE...

BLOOD BROTHERS!

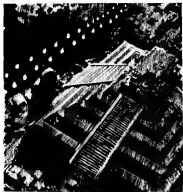
GOVERNMENT
TROOPS? WE ARE
DEADMEN MIGUEL!

NO YOU FOOL--
THEY ARE ONLY
MONKS!

WE CAN ESCAPE BEFORE
THEY RETURN!

HMM...
WHY DO THE HOLY
MEN *WIDE* LIKE
HEATHEN *THINKERS*?

WE SHALL
FOLLOW THEM,
SANCHO!





MY WOMAN'S
VILLAGE IS CLOSE--
WE WILL BE SAFE--
COME...

LOOK--A
STONE PATHWAY,
CLEARED OF
VINES!

THE ANSWER COMES, WITH THE SOFT
SOUND OF SANDALS ON STONE,
SICKENING SOUNDS...



WHAT
THE... TRAIL
LEADS
TO...

A SOLID STONE
MOUNTAIN? DID THE
BROTHERS KANISH
INTO THE NIGHT
ITSELF?!

CAUTIOUSLY THE
TWO WOULD-BE
REVOLUTIONARIES
FIND THEMSELVES
IN A DARK TANGLE
OF STRANGLING VINES.

MIGUEL, WHAT
IS HAPPENING?

PLEASE
LET US
GO!

QUIET,
SANCHO!

ONLY SATAN'S
WORK IS DONE
AT NIGHT! BUT
WHY?



WHAT
IN...?

YAAAAHHHH!!!

A YOUNG MONK RUNS OUT INTO THE
CLEARING AS IF PURSUED BY DEATH
ITSELF!



DIOS
MIO!



DEMONS!
YOU WILL NOT
TAKE ME! I WILL
KILL YOU ALL!

UNHHH!!!



YOU WILL NOT
BE KILLING ANYONE,
MY FRIEND--LEAST
OF ALL, POOR
SANCHO!

HE IS
DEAD!

AND MY RIBS
BLEED! WHY DID
YOU WAIT SO LONG
TO STOP HIM?



I AM GOING--
NOW! IF YOU WISH
TO JOIN ME--
COME!

I WILL BE
WITH YOU IN A
MOMENT, SANCHO--
THIS MONK'S
WEAPON INTERESTS
ME!

POCKETING THE STRANGE WEAPON, MIGUEL
FOLLOWS HIS WOUNDED LIBERTINIAN TO A
SMALL, SLEEPING VILLAGE...



SO MY HUSBAND,
YOU AND EL LEADER
BLEW ANOTHER
REVOLUTION!

SHUT UP
CONSUELA!

OUCH! EASY
WOMAN!



YOU LAUGH,
WOMAN-- BUT SOON
I SHALL DEFEAT OUR
OPPRESSORS WITH
THEIR OWN WEAPON--
GOLD!



GOLD?!



SI! WITH PESOS
WE BUY GUNS,
BULLETS...

THIS FOOL'S
GOLD HE PROMISES
WILL PUT YOU BEFORE
A FIRING SQUAD!



WHAT DO YOU
WANT WITH THE
BROTHERS OF
DOOM?!

JUST
ANSWER HIM,
WOMAN!

BEWARE MISUEL!
FATHER ESTEBAN
FOUNDED THEIR
ORDER!

MANY YEARS GONE, FATHERS
OF MY BLOOD SAT IN COUNSEL
WITH THE GREAT MONTEZUMA...

BEFORE THE WHITE MEN FROM THE SEA
CAME TO PLUNDER OUR LAND FATHER
ESTEBAN CAME--NOT FOR GOLD--
BUT FOR KNOWLEDGE...

AND SOON THAT KNOWLEDGE BECAME
CORRUPT.



WOMAN, YOU SEEM
TO KNOW SO MUCH-- WHO
ARE THE HOODED MONKS
WHO PROWL THE JUNGLES
AT NIGHT?



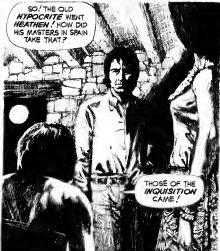
OUR PRIESTS REVEALED
THE LIFE-GIVING
RITUALS OF THE
FEATHERED SERPENT
GOD, QUETZALCOATL TO
FATHER ESTEBAN...

AND HE USED THESE
SECRETS TO BRING
DEATH TO MY PEOPLE!

FATHER ESTEBAN BUILT A MAD MONUMENT TO HIMSELF--
USING MY PEOPLE'S SWEAT AND BLOOD! MANY DIED
AS THE TEMPLE NEARED COMPLETION...
HE CREATED THE **BROTHERS OF DOOM!**
THEY PREACHED THE OLD WORDS OF THE **VANISHED**
ONES!



SO! THE OLD
HYPOCRITE WENT
NEATHEN! HOW DID
HIS MASTERS IN SPAIN
TAKE THAT?



THOSE OF THE
INQUISITION
CAME!

THEY WERE **EVIL MEN**... BUT
SOON THEY **VANISHED** IN THE
NIGHT!

THE BROTHERS **SEALED**
THE DOORS TO THEIR TEMPLE...
AND FROM THAT TIME ON, THEY
SPOKE WITH NO ONE!



FATHER ESTEBAN DIED, AND HIS PEOPLE **MOURNED** HIM AS THEY
WOULD A GOD...



TO THIS **DAY** THE
BROTHERHOOD OF DOOM
GUARDS THE **SACRED**
AZTEC TREASURES FROM
MEN OF **GREED!**

ONLY A
FOOL BELIEVES
SUCH TALES!

THEN I AM A
FOOL--BECAUSE
I HAVE **PROOF** IT
EXISTS!





THIS EBON
KNIFE!!!

ONCE SWARTHY SKINNED
CRAFTSMEN HEWED THE
BLACK VOLCANIC GLASS
FOR AN EDGE KEEN
ENOUGH TO REND HUMAN
FLESH!
FOR THIS DIVINE BLADE,
THIS KNIFE OF OBSIDIAN,
FIT ONLY FOR AN
OBSCENE RITE, THEY
FASHIONED A HILT IN THE
IMAGE OF A SQUAT,
DEFORMED DEMI-GOD,
WHO LAUGHS ETERNALLY.
PERHAPS AT THE VERY
MORTALS WHO CAST HIS
UGLY LIKENESS IN
PRECIOUS, MOLTEN
GOLD!



MIGUEL! WHAT
EVIL HAVE YOU
DONE?

STRANGE
WEAPONS FOR
YOUR INNOCENT
MONKS!

BUT AN ANTIQUE
WE CAN TRADE FOR
A GUN!



STÚPIDO!
THAT IS WHY I,
MIGUEL, SHALL BE
EL PRESIDENTE! NOT
ONE GUN SHALL WE
HAVE -- BUT MANY!



DID THE AZTECS HAVE ONLY
ONE SUCH GOLDEN KNIFE?
NO! AND WE SHALL FIND
MORE GOLD SUCH AS THIS!

SOON I SHALL BE
RICH -- WITH OUR
PRETTY CONSUELA'S
HELP!

NO!
THE OLD GODS
WILL PUNISH...



SLAP!

YOU WILL TELL ME
ALL I MUST KNOW TO
FIND THIS GOLD!
NOW!

UUUHH!

CONSUELA SPEAKS, HESITATINGLY AT FIRST, REVEALING ALL SHE KNOWS OF THE BROTHERHOOD, AND SO -- THE NEXT MORNING, A "NEW" MIGUEL STANDS BEFORE THE DREADED GATES OF DOOM.



HE IS ADMITTED TO THE TEMPLE AND LED THROUGH CORRIDORS RICH WITH ANCIENT ARTIFACTS...



I HAD A VISION, OF A YOUNG MONK, WHOSE WHITE HOOD COVERED A DEATH'S HEAD! SURELY IT IS A SIGN?



YES, THERE HAS BEEN SUCH AN... ACCIDENT...

PERHAPS THE ONE WHO KNOWS ALL HAS CHOSEN YOU AS A REPLACEMENT!

...DEEP WITHIN THE MOLDERING MONASTERY, WAS A MUSEUM, WHERE THE VICTIMOUS BROTHERHOOD PRESERVED ITS TROPHIES OF A VANQUISHED PAGANISM!

ON THIS ALTAR, THEY PLACED THE BLEEDING, STILL-BEATING HEARTS OF THE SACRIFICIAL VICTIMS --

AS AN OFFERING TO OUR GODS!



GOOD LORD!!

ONLY WORTHLESS CURIOS OF WOOD AND STONE!

YET THE GOLD MUST BE HERE... SOMEPLACE!



THINK WE'LL MY SON, BEFORE JOINING US... FATHER ESTEBAN COMMANDED THAT ONCE A MAN ENTER THE BROTHERHOOD OF DOOM HE SHALL NOT LEAVE US ALIVE!



NEVER HAD A MAN WILLINGLY **PLEADED**
FOR A MORE **PAINFUL** LIFE...



...NEVER HAD A MAN TOILED AS HARD
FOR A REWARD THAT SEEMINGLY
NEVER WOULD COME.



AT EVENING PRAYERS...



SOON THEY
SHALL KNEEL BEFORE
ME! AND **BEG** FOR
MERCY!

...UNHHH... THE **GOLD!**
I **WILL** FIND THE **GOLD!**... NO
MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES.
NO MATTER WHAT
I **MUST** DO!



YET HIS DAYS OF FALSE
PIETY GO UNREWARDED;
WITH THE WAXING OF THE
MOON, HE HEARS THE
SOFT SHUFFLE OF
SANDALS...



STILL THEY DO NOT
ENTRUST ME WITH THE
SECRET OF THEIR
MIDNIGHT **RITUALS!**

I CAN WAIT
NO LONGER!



WITH DAYBREAK, MIGUEL INTENSIFIES
HIS EFFORTS TO APPEAR A MARTYR
TO THEIR GOD!



... **GOLD!**
IT **MUST** BE MINE!
IT **MUST**...!

FUTILE UNTIL THE EVE OF THE MOON'S FULLNESS...



MY SON, YOUR
DEVOTION HAS EARNED
ITS **REWARD**-- TONIGHT
ALL THE **MYSTERIES** OF
OUR ORDER SHALL BE
REVEALED TO YOU!

AT LAST!

THAT NIGHT...

I AM A FOOL! OF
COURSE THE TREASURE
IS NOT IN THE MONASTERY.
-- IT IS HERE IN THE CITY
OF THE DEAD ONES!

THE PUZZLING
PROCESSION
FOLLOWS THE
ANCIENT JUNGLE
PATHWAY TO...

HERE A THOUSAND
AETECOS ONCE WORSHIPPED
THE BLOOD THIRSTING GOD,
QUETZALCOOTL.

ALMOST A NATURAL
CATHEDRAL, IS IT
NOT?

HERE I WILL
TRAIN MY
GUERRILLA
FORCES!

A CAVE,
CONCEALED BY A
BALANCED STONE SLAB.
THAT IS HOW THEY
VANISHED SO EARLY!

OVER 400
YEARS AGO, FATHER
ESTEBAN WAS TAKEN
BENEATH THIS ALTAR
BY THE HIGH
PRIESTS...

HE VOWED
ETERNAL PROTECTION
FOR THEIR TRUST...

SLOWLY MIGUEL SHUFFLES THROUGH THE MAZE OF CAVES-- FINALLY ENTERING THE DUSTY HALL OF ROYAL MUMMIES

KINGS WITH GOLDEN DEATH MASKS!

AND THE CLEVER INQUISITIONERS WHO TRIED TO CONDEMN ESTEBAN TO THE FLAMES. THEY DIED SLOWLY... HORRIBLY!!

AND THIS IS THE CHAMBER OF OFFERINGS!

BREAST PLATES OF GOLD! JADE! AND A THOUSAND GEMS!

WEALTH, POWER! YOU FOOLS... ENOUGH TO RULE THE WORLD!

I HAVE COME TO LEAD YOU!

POWER IS IN THE WAYS OF THE OLD ONES!

AS FOR YOU, MORTAL-- YOU ARE TO REPLACE THE BROTHER YOU CALLOUSLY KILLED...

A BROTHER DESTINED TO FEED THE GODS!

POOR MIGUEL... BEFORE WE CUT OUT TO MY NEXT PALPITATING PLOT, THE BROTHERHOOD SEEMS TO HAVE A KIDNAP--ANY VOLUNTEERS? REMEMBER THE ONLY PREREQUISITE FOR THE JOB IS A LOT OF HEART!

AARRGGGII!!



THERE BE
GRAVE DOINGS
AFOOT, SO LET'S
DIG IN.

THE ACCURSED!

I NEVER THOUGHT
I'D ATTEMPT THIS. NOT
ALONE, CERTAINLY, BUT
NONE OF THE DAMNED
TOWNSPEOPLE WILL HELP
ME. HOPE I DON'T
HAVE TO USE MY PISTOL.

I MUST
DO IT, FOR...
HIM.



HAVE TO
DIG UP GREY
ARKHAM'S
GRAVE.

CR-RASSH!!

A MILLION CORPSE-EYES FASTEN UPON HIM. A WIND BLOWS UP, MOCKING HIM WITH MIDNIGHT CHILL. UNNUMBERED TOMBSTONES FACE HIM ACCUSINGLY. THIS IS A PLACE OF DEATH. WHAT RIGHT HAS HE TO BE HERE?



NEVER FELT
SO ALONE. IT
BEGINS
NOW.

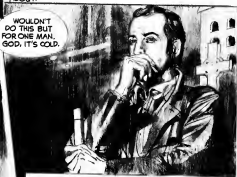
HE SENSES THE HORROR BEFORE SEEING IT,
PASSING UNDER A GROUP OF GHOST-TREES. A
SLAVERING, UNHOLY STALKER OF THE NIGHT.



... BY THE
ALMIGHTY...!

PULLING THE COLLAR OF HIS COAT TIGHTER, TRASK INFILTRATES
THE UNMOWING SEA OF ANCIENT DEATH, GLANCING CAUTIOUSLY
ABOUT.

WOULDN'T
DO THIS BUT
FOR ONE MAN.
GOD, IT'S COLD.



HE RECOGNIZES THE DISTORTED FEATURES OF GREY
ARKHAM... SORCERER! AND THE BEAST READIES TO
SPRING...



ANOTHER LEGEND
DISPROVED, YOU CAN
SLAY A WEREWOLF WITH
ORDINARY BULLETS. AT
LEAST ONE IN THE
IMAGE OF ITS CREATOR.
WHAT OTHER DEMONS
DID ARKHAM LEAVE
TO GUARD HIS
GRAVE?

ANCESTRAL FEARS OF THE DEAD HAUNT HIM,
SHRIEKING FROM SHOL DARKNESS IGNORED BY THE
SCANT MOONLIGHT. HE GRIMLY AWAITS THE NEW
TERRORS HE IS SURE WILL COME.

THE HORDE CONVERGES
QUICKLY TO BITE, SLASH,
ATTACK!

SQU-EEK! EE-EEEEK!

...WHAT?
BATS...

HE GOES DOWN, HUGGLES AGAINST A TOMBSTONE,
FANGS VICIOUSLY BITE AND TEAR AT HIS COAT, CLAWS
RAKE ACROSS HAIR AND UNPROTECTED SKIN,
RAINING LACERATIONS AND BLOOD.

AAGH!
MY FACE!

HE RIPS THE POCKET OPEN, THE LIGHTER FLARES
INTO LIFE AND TRASK THRUSTS IT AT THE NEAREST
VAMPIRE.

SKREEEE!

...SHIRT POCKET...
LORD LET ME
REACH IT...

HE WRAPS COAT-TATTERS ROUND A BRANCH AND IGNITES IT, THE DEMONS BURN, AND SCREAM, AND FLY AWAY.



THE GHOSTLY SCENE BRINGS HIM NEAR MADNESS. TO COUNTER IT, HIS MIND DRIFTS BACK, A DAY AGO...

DAMN YOU!
DAMN YOU! GET
AWAY FROM
ME!

AS LONG AS ARKHAM'S
BODY REMAINS IN THE
CEMETERY UNDISTURBED,
OUR BURIAL PLACE IS
ACCUSED! NONE WHO LAY
THERE SHALL KNOW REST.
AND HIS POWER MAY WELL
EXTEND BEYOND THE
GRAVE!

...SACRILEGE! FOR
THE BODY OF GREY ARKHAM...
WARLOCK AND MURDERER...
TO BE BURIED IN THE TOWN
CEMETERY BY MISGUIDED
FOLLOWERS.

FATHER,
I'M JUST GLAD
HE *IS* BURIED. THAT
OLD MAN HELD AN
EVIL SPELL OVER
THIS TOWN.

WE ALL KNOW HE
HELD BLOODY, UNHOLY
RITUALS AT THAT OLD
HOUSE. MANY
PEOPLE "DISAPPEARED"
BUT DID THE SHERIFF DO
ANYTHING? HAH! SCARED
LIKE ALL THE REST.

YOU A MAN OF
THE CLOTH, MEAN
SOMEONE SHOULD
REMOVE OR DESTROY
IT? WHY SHOULD
ANYONE TRY TO TACKLE
SUCH A JOB?

THEY DO NOT NOTICE THE
WOMAN UNTIL SHE IS AMONG
THEM, SPEAKING IN A VOICE
HARSH AS THE BITING AUTUMN
WIND.

YOU KNOW
WHY, DON'T
YOU, JOSEPH
TRASK?

YOU KNOW
WHY.



HE STUMBLES IN DEATH-DARKNESS, TRYING TO RECALL THE DIRECTION OF HIS GOAL. STOPPING TO WIPE BLOOD FROM HIS EYES, HE SPIES IT AT LAST.



I KNOW WHY...
WHY, GOOD LORD...
THERE IT...

...SORCERER...
RITUALIST... SACRIFICIAL
MURDERER... DYING
FROM SOMETHING AS
MORTAL AS A HEART
ATTACK.

GOD GIVE
ME THE STRENGTH
TO DIG HIM UP.

FERCELY, WITHOUT CEASING, HE DIGS! HOURS FLOOD BY UNTIL HE STOPS TEN FEET DEEP!



WHY BURIED
SO DEEP, ARKHAM?
WANT TO BE CLOSER
TO HELL? GOT TO
OPEN THE COFFIN
NOW...

NO. NOT
WHEN I'M THIS
CLOSE.

ANOTHER JOINS THE FIRST. LOW THROATED SHARLING ACCOMPANIES THEIR LEAP.



NO! NOOOO!!



FLAMING RED EYES MEET TRACKS AS HE GLANCES UP. THE RAT IS LARGE AND CAKED WITH FILTH.

HE EMPTIES THE REVOLVER, USING THE SHOVEL AS A SHIELD FOR FACE AND THROAT, FOR WHICH THE PACK REPEATEDLY SPRINGS.

THE DIGGING INSTRUMENT BECOMES A SCYTHE, A PENDULUM OF HURLING BLOODY DEATH. SECTIONS OF GRAVE-WALL CRUMBLE UNDER THE FEROCIOUS ONSLAUGHT.



THE FOUL RODENTS ARE EVERYWHERE. TRASK PLUNGES THE TOOL DOWNWARDS... SMASHES THROUGH THE COFFIN LID OF BLACK LOCUST WOOD.

...AND THE RATS FLEE!



THE CORPSE LEERS UP AT HIM. ONLY A FEW DAYS BURIED, ITS OWN GODLESS EVIL HAS REDUCED IT TO A DECAYED, SICKENING HEAP OOOZING MAGGOTS AND WORMS AND STENCH.



HE IS REVULSED, CLOSE TO VOMITING, BLEEDING HEAVILY, STUNNED FROM SHOCK. YET HE STRUGGLES. PULLS THE VILE CADAVER FROM OUT THE GRAVE.

WON'T BE...
BEATEN NOW...
WON'T.

GAAA!

WON'T BE BEATEN...
FIGHT YOU...TILL
I DIE!

RREEEE!

THE POWER OF THE BEYOND, THE DAMNED, IT WORKS AGAIN NOW, MALIGNANTLY, UNSEEN...

ARKHAM UPRIGHTS HIMSELF ON BONY PUTRESCENT LEGS... MOVES TOWARD HIS PAIN-AGONISED VICTIM. INSANE SKELETAL LAUGHTER RISES FROM NOWHERE.

AA-HAH! HAH!
HAHH!

BLOOD FROM HIS CHEST SOAKS HIS SHIRT, RUNS DOWN HIS CLOTHES... HE IS HALF-DEAD, BUT HE RISES AND STRIKES! WEAKENED, ROTTEN BONE AND CARTILAGE PARTS UNDER HIS VIOLENT, DESPERATE BLOWS...

...UNTIL THE CORE OF EVIL, ARKHAM'S
UNDYING BRAIN, IS MASHED TO PULP!



CORPSE IS...
DESTROYED... CURSE
...LIFTED! NOW...
JUST ONE MORE
GOAL... TO...
REACH.

MINUTE'S ONLY REMAIN TO HIM. DEATH TEARS AND PULLS WITH MERCILESS FINGERS AT HIS WEARY, MUTILATED BODY, BUT
FIERCE DETERMINATION MAKES HIM CLAW THE GROUND AND CRAWL... UNTIL HIS GOAL IS ATTAINED.



YOU CAN...
REST IN PEACE
AGAIN. I DID IT FOR
YOU. I DIDN'T
FORGET... I
DIDN'T...



...NOW YOU
CAN REST...
REST IN PEACE
FOREVER...
DAD!



RICHARD TRASK
(1905-1973)
BELOVED FATHER OF
JOSEPH TRASK
MAY HE REST IN PEACE

END

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN BLOCK LETTERS:

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THE DARK BEAUTY LED THEM TO AN ANCIENT
MONASTERY...AND A FABULOUS TREASURE.
BUT WITHIN ITS WALLS LURKED...THE MONKS OF DEATH.

BLOOD BROTHERS



ONLY ONE
OF EIGHT
EXCITING
STORIES
AWAITING
YOU IN
THIS ISSUE.